

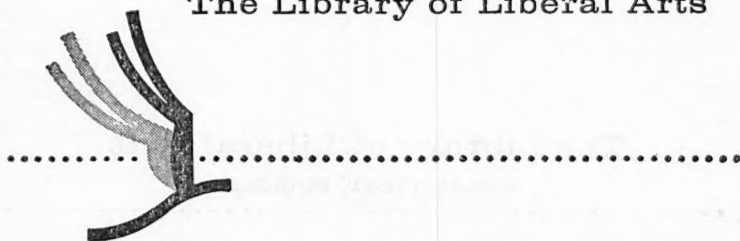
**SOURCES OF  
CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL  
REALISM IN AMERICA**

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SOURCES OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
REALISM IN AMERICA

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The Library of Liberal Arts

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## FOREWORD

"The Story of American Realism," published by William Pepperell Montague near the close of his life (and here reprinted in part) as well as the story that I have tried to tell in my *History of American Philosophy* (revised edition; New York, 1963; reprinted here in part) were written after the movement had lost its first impetus and assurance. But these retrospections should not be interpreted as burial rites. It is already clear that the movement of the early decades of this century created enduring foundations for contemporary thinking. Being foundational, realism is now less conspicuous. Nevertheless, realistic habits of criticism and realistic presuppositions are increasingly conspicuous. The polemic has subsided into a milieu.

The early formulations, platforms, and fulminations that are reprinted here have already become obscure and are buried in a few libraries. For the convenience of those young Americans who do not trouble to call themselves realists and to whom the logomachies here recorded are mere history (or less), the basic materials are here assembled for information and study. Successive generations have a way of forgetting their most recent past and even of repudiating it; their fathers are more passé than their grandfathers, who are apt to reappear in the academic garb of dissertations. This hasty generalization is true, in any case, of American realism as an aggressive movement. The aim of this book is not to present realism as a platform of doctrines, but rather to present the movement as one of the realities of American history.

This publication gives me the welcome opportunities of correcting a few errors that crept into my larger *History* and of presenting a Bibliography of the movement and Biographical Notes on its prime movers.

H. W. S.

*The Blaisdell Institute*  
*Claremont, California*  
March 1964

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## INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century there has developed a temper and tendency in American philosophical thinking which is significantly distinctive. Nothing like it exists elsewhere. It is composed of many elements, several of which have been imported from Europe. In part, it is the culmination of the work of a generation of American philosophers who are now no longer living but whose ideas are basic to the work of those who are living. The labors of the revolutionary generation of William James, C. S. Peirce, Josiah Royce, and John Dewey (to mention only the big four)<sup>1</sup> have by this time produced something which is internationally recognized as distinctively American philosophy. But this emergence of an American type of thought would not have been achieved without the fresh stimulus coming from across the Atlantic through the work of Russell, Whitehead, and G. E. Moore; Einstein, Bergson, Husserl, and Freud; Poincaré, Carnap, Cassirer, Maritain, Santayana, T. S. Eliot, Harold Laski, Kierkegaard, Unamuno, and Tillich. Many "winds of doctrine" have blown recently over "the American scene"—a scene created by the great Americans of the turn of the century and then exposed to the world storms of recent decades. Though these winds blow from diverse quarters and create confusion, they have also served to create a characteristic American response. The systems of doctrine and lines of investigation which now flourish in the United States have an integrity and a universality which make them the object of serious attention at home and abroad.

There is widespread awareness of this fact, but there is no clear conception of what is actually going on. There is a confusion of "isms." One hears much of naturalism, realism, positivism, empiricism, humanism; there is a "radical" this and a

<sup>1</sup> For further information on persons mentioned in the text, see the Biographical Notes, p. 87.

"neo-" that. Some new blend of old doctrines seems to be in the making, but just what this American way of philosophizing may be, no one can say. The way cannot be defined because no one knows where it is leading. But as a method of technical procedure, the way can be recognized if one looks at it from a reasonable distance. Consequently, without attempting to locate or to define a prevalent American "school" of philosophy, the following pages indicate the dominant traits of the way in which most American philosophers are attempting to solve their problems or are persisting in stating them.

This sketch of twentieth-century trends is, however, not an outline of contemporary American thought. An outline of the present is practically impossible, for the present does not exist in lines. The approach to an understanding of this curious present must be historical—an outline of the sources, source materials, and resources with which the present generation labors. This story of the emergence of American realism from idealism, pragmatism, evolutionism, and experimentalism is not a long one, but it is complicated and difficult to state clearly. Both the ideas and the terminologies through which realism is expressed are unconventional and unstandardized. However, the reader will soon discover that he is confronted with the following major trends.

## 1. OBJECTIVISM

There has been a many-sided effort to imitate the sciences. All problems are to be conceived in terms which render them communicable, visible to the public, observable by the ordinary ways of critical examination. Suggested solutions to the problems are to be verifiable by standardized operations. This passionate concern for objectivity is not an uncritical continuation of what Europeans call "nineteenth-century scientism," but is a revolt against nineteenth-century romanticism and self-conscious introspection, which still thrives here and there in exasperated version. Let the self and its awareness be taken

for granted, say the American realists; now, what is there to be known objectively? This conception of philosophic method is quite different from the prevalent European concerns with subjective being and phenomenological analysis.

## 2. BEHAVIORISM

By this term is not meant the extreme position of those psychologists who ignored consciousness, but rather the attempt to link philosophy with those sciences which have come to be known as "the behavioral sciences." The mental and moral life of man was to be studied as a social science by observing men's conduct and overt reactions. This interest implied a primary concern with human affairs, but they were to be studied as "events" in a natural environment. Such an approach to what Europeans call "philosophical anthropology" is also in sharp contrast to contemporary European methods for dealing with the "spirit" of man.

## 3. ANTI-IDEALISM

American realism means primarily a reaction against idealism. Whereas European phenomenologists were inclined merely to bracket the puzzles of metaphysics created by idealistic theories of knowledge while they continued to build on the foundations of "critical" idealism, these American realists were rebels against the idealist way of thinking and tried to justify their rebellion.

Before the reader can understand why and how "objectivism" and "behaviorism" are related to an anti-idealist revolt, he must have some acquaintance with the two types of idealism which developed in Europe during the nineteenth century and which are commonly labeled "objective" and "subjective" idealism. Both types had been conceived in the framework of a rational, critical theory of knowledge and recognized their common sources in the polemics of the ancient Greek Sophists and in the dialogues of Plato. But during the

nineteenth century, both the objective idealism of the modern, continental rationalists and the subjective idealism of the British "psychological" empiricists were given romantic development and poetic expression, notably in Germany. In the United States, both idealisms, with all their romantic trappings, were taken as sober truth and adapted to a culture in which the romance of colonial expansion had given way to the idealization of a commonplace expansiveness. The best representative of this attitude was Walt Whitman, who was recognized as an American icon by Europe, whereas he himself imagined himself to be in rebellion against "the genteel tradition" (represented by Emerson), the prophet of a new, democratic, realistic spirit.<sup>2</sup> Whitman typifies the embarrassment of nineteenth-century American idealism in its attempt to unify North and South in a sentimental heroism, to identify social "merging" with individualism, and democracy with personal absolutism; "to you, whoever you are, endless salutations."

More American than Walt Whitman's expansiveness was the tradition against which the twentieth century realists revolted, a tradition which cultivated both the public order and the individual idiosyncrasies of American life, regarding them not as incompatibles but as polarities around which all experience circled as though they were the two foci of a cultural ellipse. Americans were accustomed to idealizing both public virtue and individual integrity, and this idealization was neither romantic nor critical—it was habitual. They were accustomed to thinking of both the great Virginians and the New Englanders as joint founding fathers. They praised both Jefferson and Emerson, orating in Jeffersonian terms in public and reading Emerson in the privacy of the parlor.

Philosophically this habit of mind implied the complete separation without opposition between natural moral law and personal conscientiousness. The one was grounded in the objective, public order; the other in the depths of subjective

<sup>2</sup> See Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, first published in 1871, "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 9 (New York, 1949).

consciousness. As long as these two traditions remained isolated from each other, each could repeat with minor variations the doctrines which had been imported from Europe. Both were cherished and neither served to criticize the other. In general, the republican theory of objective law was taught by statesmen and men of affairs; the romantic idealism of inner, personal being was taught by preachers and professors.

Let me choose, as my spokesmen for the two traditions, two men who represent the division of labor between public thinking and professional thought, both of them men regarded as distinctively American, but who were nevertheless stimulated to an exceptional degree by European thought and literature. Let me contrast the republican statesman, Thomas Jefferson, and the Harvard psychologist, William James. They symbolize and express admirably the traditional dualism in American idealism. They differ radically in the sense that they have little in common, yet any thoughtful American realizes that in his own mind there is a heritage of both. These two, Jefferson and James, both had a European education, a cosmopolitan culture, and a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind." They were among the least provincial Americans and their ideas were intended by them to apply not merely to American life, but to human experience in its broadest and deepest ranges.

Had it not been for the philosophical breadth of Jefferson's republicanism, the American Revolution might have been little more than a rebellion against Great Britain. He was foremost among those who believed that the political rebellion of 1776 should culminate in the social revolution of 1800. Jefferson was a disciple of Montesquieu and of the Idealogues. He was also a student of Roman law and of Ciceronian republicanism. He was the outstanding American representative of the Enlightenment and the most sincere friend of the First French Republic. A champion of both natural and civil rights, he conceived liberty to be definable in terms of these rights or "liberties." To safeguard them he relied in part on Montesquieu's device of the separation of powers in the government,



particularly on the Supreme Court; but he relied even more on what Montesquieu called *l'esprit des lois*, which in the case of republican government implied a constant discipline of the whole body of citizens in "civic virtue" or public spirit. This would be the primary aim of compulsory public education, which he advocated strenuously and which implied to his mind much more than elementary literacy. It implied the exercise of good judgment by the whole body of citizens, and not merely by their representatives in the government. He based his high hopes for such a republic not on a naive faith in the equality of "good sense" among all men, but in the creation, through education, moral discipline, and practical experience, of public-spirited communities. In short, he tried to revive the ancient ideal of *politeia* on a democratic basis. I mention all this in some detail in order to emphasize my point that in the Jeffersonian tradition the virtue of public spirit or civic virtue, precisely because it is not natural, must be cultivated objectively in democracies. Thus the classical republicanism of Montesquieu and Jefferson became an ideology for the nation before it became partisan. It also became a great American dogma to which Americans continue to swear fidelity and do so the more religiously the farther their public life departs from its ideals. His idea of public spirit became a vague notion of "public service." Hence it was possible not only for Woodrow Wilson but for millions of other Americans to imagine that when they launched out into world politics they were really "making the world safe for democracy." Such blind idealism is not yet dead in spite of the realist movement! Thus the idea of the "great American public" symbolizes for Americans today both an eighteenth-century ideal and a twentieth-century ideology.

Turning now from the theory of public spirit to that of the private individual, we encounter a very different idealism. The need for more adequate theories of human nature had been felt and expressed by many American men of letters throughout the nineteenth century, notably by the humanitarian preacher, William Ellery Channing, by the reformer,

Theodore Parker, and by America's secular oracle, Ralph Waldo Emerson. But none of these men had the technical competence for such a task, being all of them handicapped by an antiquated education and a provincial environment. It was William James's good fortune that he could study in Europe under the masters of biological and psychological science, and that he had both a scientific interest in medicine and a lively imagination which enabled him to look both clinically and sympathetically at sick souls, including his own. In this study he profited greatly by the works of Maine de Biran, Renouvier, and Bergson, but even more by his enthusiasm for the French introspective literature of his time, both the novelists and the poets. His brother, Henry James, who was an even greater enthusiast for this French literature, reinforced this interest in him and encouraged him in that sense of the subtleties of our emotional life, which, even more than his researches in physiological psychology in Germany, gave him his extraordinary ability to analyze consciousness. I need not repeat here the familiar outlines of his psychology, which as psychology is now of minor interest, for I wish to present it as the antithesis of Jefferson's philosophy. James was preoccupied with the individual consciousness, its emotions, its continual flow, its bondage to the will, its sense of the divine presence, its solitude, its pathology, etc. The social and public aspects of human experience were practically ignored. Even his pluralism is not a social pluralism, but a metaphysical concept, and when he speculated about the compounding of consciousness and the meeting of minds, it was not to social psychology that he turned, but to pan-psychism. His "radical empiricism" was similar to that of Maine de Biram, an attempt to find in immediate, personal experience, in "feelings of activity," of effort and continuity, an adequate basis for self-analysis. The more spontaneous, personal, and private an experience was, the more it interested William James.

Thus the republicanism of Jefferson and the introspective individualism of James represent a basic polarity in American thought. It is against this background, this polarity, that re-

cent American realism must be projected to be intelligible. Its primary concern is to expose abstractions. It regards both the public-spirited citizen of Jefferson and the pure experience postulated in the psychology of James as not merely extreme or extraordinary types of human experience, but as philosophic abstractions, invented to make knowledge of the facts more baffling. The new realism and naturalism, the so-called "objective relativism," in its attempt to mediate between classicism and romanticism, between an abstract general will and an equally abstract isolated will, between purely public and purely private experience, is engaged in an undertaking which, though it is shared by movements of thought in other times and places, is of immediate and urgent concern for American culture. Americans who have been nourished on this diet of opposite abstractions are unprepared to deal effectively with their actual problems or to understand intelligently their real selves.

The pragmatic movement proved to be an entering wedge in realistic analysis, for with the help of pragmatic interpretations of ideas and problems it has become easier to see how abstract and distorted the traditional analyses of experience have been, and it has become easier to formulate the actual issues which the present generation faces.

The name of William James is inevitably associated with pragmatism, but for James himself, pragmatism was incidental to his philosophy, not central; it afforded him a methodology for evading certain metaphysical issues that kept haunting him throughout his life and that constitute the real center of his thought. James was therefore both the antithesis and the father of the new realism. His own struggle toward realism is in fact the best example of what contemporary philosophy in America, largely inspired by him, is aiming at. In James we find two distinct philosophies of mind, two radically different theories which he seems to have consciously kept apart until shortly before his death. When he finally applied his own pragmatic method to his own theory of consciousness, he produced a sensational essay. It bore the title, "Does Conscious-

ness Exist?" With the appearance of this essay, the realistic movement in American philosophy was born.

Against this background of American tradition and idealization, it may be possible for the reader to appreciate the peculiar significance which the realistic ideals of "objectivism" and "behaviorism" have for twentieth-century American philosophers. Underlying the more technical issues of "critical realism," "radical empiricism," logical analysis, naturalism, and humanism is this basic aim in the new realist movement to overcome the traditional dualism between object and subject, public and private experience which has haunted many generations of philosophers and which in the United States has become a major concern of philosophical analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter abbreviated as *JP*.

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**Part One**





## THE TWO PSYCHOLOGIES OF WILLIAM JAMES

The reader of the two big volumes of James's *Principles of Psychology* will be struck by the casual way in which the work is strung together. To be sure, in those days (1890) psychology was still an infant science and had as yet no conventional structure, but even so, there is an apparent indifference on the part of the author to the sequence of chapters, each of which stands as an essay in itself and many of which were in fact published as articles. The reader of the generous footnotes will notice, however, that in almost every chapter the author raises problems whose solution, he says, is unnecessary or impossible for scientific purposes, and which he postpones until the final chapter, where he intends to discuss them because of their speculative or metaphysical interest for philosophy. This in itself is not so startling, since it was common among Victorian phenomenologists, as it has since then become common among phenomenologists, to "bracket" certain metaphysical questions. Many philosophical readers have been deceived by this device and have dismissed the bulk of James's work as mere empiricism, while seeking in the last chapter the outlines of James's philosophy. But this is a serious error, for in the last chapter, entitled "Necessary Truths and the Effects of Experience," the only one of the many speculative questions discussed by James is the problem of "psychogenesis," as he calls it, the problem of whether mental structure is of transcendental or empirical origin. On this question he states his position at once;<sup>1</sup> it may be summarized as follows: the transcendentalists are correct on the question of *fact*, and the naturalists correct on the question of *cause*. By "the natu-

<sup>1</sup> William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York, 1890), II, 618.

ralists" he means the Darwinians. The chapter is one of his many attacks on Herbert Spencer's naive appeal to "the experience of the race" to explain biological structures; James favors a Darwinian explanation of "cause," namely, that man's categorical mental and moral structure is one of many possible "spontaneous variations" which happened to occur in the course of events and which has survived because of its utility. Such Darwinian "causes" are evidently not naturalistic explanations but evolutionistic postulates. The whole discussion, therefore, is another instance of James's preference for a Darwinian belief in the "spontaneity" of nature's variations rather than for Spencer's faith in uniformity and the more or less mechanical operation of the laws of association in experience. Spontaneity in nature seemed to James a relatively scientific hypothesis for the voluntaristic categories which he was accustomed to use in his psychology. He attempts to sum up his whole philosophy<sup>2</sup> by referring back to the theme of his early essay on the function of thought in experience, and in this summary he tries to define the relations between four basic terms:

1. Reality or fact, which "exists as a *plenum*,"
2. Experience, the given, "a chaos of fragmentary impressions" or "the brute order of our experience" without the selective action of
3. Thought, which fits (2) into the a priori structure of thought for the sake of
4. Will, man's "definite subjective purposes, preferences."

The *Principles of Psychology* is concerned with the interrelation of (2), (3), and (4); in these volumes James does not deal with the relation of (1) to (4), which is the theme of his popular essays and lectures and which was of basic moral interest to him personally. The theory of (1), reality or fact, is dismissed by James not only in his *Psychology* but in all of his writings with the remark that he takes existence for granted,

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 634 and the footnote which refers to the essay reprinted in *The Will to Believe* (New York, 1908).

or that he is a naive, common-sense realist, or that he is not raising "the idealist question" at all.<sup>3</sup> Even his philosophical problems concern merely the factual relations of (1) to (2), (3), and (4).

This factual analysis, however, falls apart into two quite different accounts of *mind*, each complete in itself, depending on whether James begins his analysis with (2) or with (4). The philosophy that is based on (2) might be called his Introspectionist Theory of Mind, or his Phenomenology of Consciousness. It begins, after some methodological preliminaries in Chapters VII and VIII of the *Psychology*, with his famous Chapter IX, "The Stream of Thought," which had been published as early as 1884 under the title "On some Omissions of Introspective Psychology." He himself refers later to the circumstances which led to the discovery of the thesis of this essay:

Years ago, when T. H. Green's ideas were most influential, I was much troubled by his criticisms of English sensationalism. One of his disciples in particular would always say to me, "Yes! *terms* may indeed be possibly sensational in origin; but *relations*, what are they but pure acts of the intellect coming upon the sensations from above, and of a higher nature?" I well remember the sudden relief it gave me to perceive one day that *space*-relations at any rate were homogeneous with the terms between which they mediated. The terms were spaces and the relations were other intervening spaces.<sup>4</sup>

In the chapter on the perception of space and in this whole part of his work James is evidently preoccupied with the problem central in British idealism, namely, How can relations be related to the given? James's simple answer was that relations as well as terms are given. He emphasized the *sense of relativity*. On this basis he built Chapter X, "The Consciousness of Self," in which he develops the idea that "the passing thought is the thinker." Then follow Chapters XV to XXI

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Meaning of Truth* (New York, 1909), pp. 50 n., 195.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322 n.

which culminate in his theory of "the perception of reality." In this last chapter (XXI) of the series he is concerned with the emotional side of belief: a belief, he explains, is an attitude. Here he is explicitly following Taine. He sums up the discussion by saying, "Belief and attention are the same fact. For the moment, what we attend to is reality."<sup>5</sup> It must be clear to anyone who reads this discussion that James is here consistently a psychologist, and is speaking not of reality in the sense of (1) above, but of the perception or meaning of reality in consciousness.

Thus this central part of the *Psychology* forms a connected account of consciousness, beginning with "the brute order" or "big, blooming, buzzing confusion" of the given and culminating in the psychology of belief out of which his pragmatism developed. This whole account of mind concentrates on the inner, immediate view of mind as the given, and consists essentially of a detailed demonstration of what is now known as "the intentionality of the given." He states his position clearly in terms of the distinction between "acquaintance knowledge" as found in the primary data of consciousness and "knowledge about" or discursive knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Expressed in these terms, this portion of his theory of mind might be described as his account of what is "known about" acquaintance knowledge. The mind, from such a point of view, is the identity of "the thinker and the passing thought" and all thinking is some kind or other of attitude or feeling. In other words, such a science of consciousness culminates in an analysis of emotions as such, not of their causes or consequences. This doctrine of James's is a phenomenology of the emotional life, with an emphasis on attitudes of believing and knowing.

But there is a second philosophy in James's *Psychology* which we may call his naturalism or activism. There is a coherent exposition in Chapters I-VI, XI-XIV, XXII-XXVI of his biological account of mental *acts*, culminating in his natu-

<sup>5</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, II, 322 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 185-221.

realistic treatment of the will. "Psychology is a natural science," he says.<sup>7</sup> His biological definition of a mental act is "the pursuance of ends."<sup>8</sup> Then follows, after a physiological analysis of the functioning of the brain, his famous chapter on "Habit." Organic habits, he explains, are due to the "plasticity of the organic materials."<sup>9</sup> Then he links habit with effort and makes his characteristic maxim, which was a basic proposition in his ethics: "Keep the faculty of effort alive."<sup>10</sup> This leads him to the biology of attention and to the whole theory of reasoning, which culminates in his two chapters on conception and reasoning. The important doctrine in this theory is: "The only meaning of essence is teleological."<sup>11</sup> This philosophy is the theory of the growth of animal intelligence or sagacity into reason. It asserts that the practical working of the mind depends on habits of generalization and on the ability to select "essences" that are relevant to action. Here the mind is taken as a natural fact or "reality" in sense (1) above, and its operation is a kind of life or action controlled by (4), but (4) too, that is, the will, is in this same realm of biological facts, facts of "plasticity." This part of James's *Psychology* is clearly an evolutionary, naturalistic, approach to animal intelligence and human reason.

James's final chapter of the *Psychology* is his summary attempt to relate these two totally different theories of mind—the phenomenology of consciousness (which concludes with a defense of the a priori nature of mental forms), and the biology of intelligence (which concludes with his belief in natural spontaneity).

For many years James worked on both psychologies in relative independence, though he seems to have realized occasionally that he was in serious trouble. A pathetic instance of James's awareness of the basic difference between the two points of view, to both of which he was committed, was his criticism of the "automaton theory" on emotional grounds. He was considering seriously the thoroughly mechanical inter-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 126.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 5, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 335.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 105.

pretation of mind when it occurred to him (during his honeymoon!) that an automatic sweetheart, even if mechanically perfect, would not be a complete or satisfactory sweetheart without the consciousness of mutual sensibility, awareness, or innerness. And he argued then and repeatedly afterward that a purely naturalistic philosophy of purpose or mind would never be satisfactory to *human* beings, however much it might be convincing to scientists.

Finally, his worry over the conflict in his philosophy took the form of his inability to decide whether ideas can be compounded or not; he felt the dilemma of believing either in psychic atoms or in panpsychism, neither of which was congenial to him. Here Bergson came to his rescue by convincing him that his idealist "logic of identity" was a vicious "intellectualism."

But James did not stop here. Persuading himself that consciousness itself is an abstraction and not an existence, he developed a relational theory of mind which he called a philosophy of "pure experience" but which later realists interpreted as "objective relativism." But before we examine this new realism to which James was inclined during his last years, I must interrupt the account of this development in order to describe the way in which one of James's students developed the conflicting theories of mind in James's psychology into a systematic dualism.

## II

### SANTAYANA'S SYSTEMATIC DUALISM

The words of Santayana are still used as a bible by certain American realists, not because he was a realistic philosopher, but because his poetic rhetoric makes wonderful texts for realist sermons. He gave to the movement a programmatic breadth and fervor; he formulated both a "natural basis" and an "ideal fulfillment" for American realism. Nevertheless, Santayana himself was never more than a half-hearted realist and less than a half-hearted American. One of the most general and fundamental articles in the American realist creed is fidelity to science. Realism's ambition is still to construct a metaphysics, or at least a theory of existence, which shall be thoroughly scientific. Santayana had little of this passion and was drawn into the polemics of the realist movement chiefly by his friend, Charles Augustus Strong. Out of this polemic came Santayana's *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923), which is by far the best statement of his dualism. When later he discovered his *four* realms of being, he emphasized the "life of the spirit" to such an extent that most of his scientifically minded, realist friends became alarmed. They believed Santayana had succumbed to the seductions of Italy, possibly of Holy Rome. He himself said that it was his Italian friend, Leone Vivante, who taught him to take spirit seriously. This implied that he learned to take "intuition" more seriously than reason, and imagination than science. When he looked back on his early *Reason in Common Sense* he was shocked by the confusions he found in it, and thought he ought to rewrite it entirely, but, thinking it had some merit as a historical landmark, he contented himself with a new introduction. To follow the transition from *Reason in Common Sense* to *Scepticism and*

*Animal Faith* is also to follow the emergence of dualistic realism out of James's psychologies.

*Reason in Common Sense*, the introductory volume to *The Life of Reason*, is dominated by the thought of James, though the language is classicist. The use of the term "common sense" in the title is a curious bit of evidence, for the term does not occur in the text of the volume, and it is obvious to any reader that Santayana was using the term, not in any technical sense, but merely as James, too, used it to signify an attitude of naive realism, a disinclination to discuss the validity of natural knowledge, and a wholehearted acceptance of the common facts of experience. The volume is, like James's *Psychology*, a description of the natural or biological conditions of the growth of reason among men. The story runs about as follows: the living union of the stream of consciousness, the "flux," and of the will or "instinct" produces two kinds of "concretions," depending upon whether experience is organized by "association by similarity" or "association by contiguity." "Concretions" is a cleverly coined, vague word to express the Jamesian notion of the "thickening" of experience: concretions based on association by similarity are ideas or essences or "concretions in discourse"; concretions based on association by contiguity are "things."<sup>1</sup> The description of the "perception of essence" leads Santayana, as it did James, directly into the contention that "all thought is practical."<sup>2</sup>

The whole subject of "the flux" is introduced by the distinction between "the existential chaos" (James's "reality" in sense (1) of our preceding section) which can be taken for granted, and the initial chaos in human experience, the "uninterpreted" immediacy of feeling. Santayana, like James, treats these two as a double "chaos"; he refers to the course of events as the "absolute flux" and regards the flow of sentience as an illustration of it. He does not refer to this chaos as "nature," but consistently reserves the term "nature," as do idealists, for the *idea* of the order of nature, which emerges in

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Reason in Common Sense* (New York, 1905), pp. 161-63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-82.



common sense but comes to full expression only in physical science and the idea of mechanism. The chief natural forces to which he refers here are "instincts" or the irrational impulses of animals.<sup>3</sup> In general, it is clear that throughout *Reason in Common Sense* there is an adaptation of idealistic terminology, as in James; the language of Santayana is somewhat closer to Schopenhauer's than was James's but the thought is closer to James's. The real and the phenomenal are distinguished but not separated.

In the Preface to the second edition, thirty years later, Santayana himself refers to this ambiguity and confesses that since the time when he wrote *The Life of Reason* he had learned to take nature more seriously and human affairs less so. He explains that when he represented nature as arising out of sentiency he, of course, meant the idea of nature, since nature never arises out of anything.

In *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923) all this vague mixture of biological naturalism and introspective empiricism which we have found so characteristic of James and the early Santayana disappears. Here there is an absolutely sharp separation of the given and the believed. Putting his own interpretation on James's late doubts about the existence of consciousness, he asserts flatly that "nothing given exists." The human "psyche" (a new term in Santayana's vocabulary, and an important one) has two radically different functions: intuition of the given, and animal faith in the nongiven. Pure acquaintance or immediacy is not knowledge of any existence whatsoever. Nevertheless it has its appropriate objects, namely, essences. Here the whole theory of association by similarity on which he and James had rested the teleological approach to the perception of essence drops out. In its place is the phenomenological assertion that the sheer presence of a datum, without any belief, implies an identifiable object. Such an act of pure intuition involves a spiritual discipline, for normally the psyche does not live without asserting its animal faith or instinct. Santayana now lays stress on the cultivation of habits

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41.

of detachment or contemplation, in order to combat the normal or "animal" habits of teleological interest in essences. To be concerned with essences only as they bear upon existence now seemed to him an illiberal sacrifice of imagination to science and of the enjoyment of essence to the exercise of animal faith.

On the other hand, Santayana explains in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* that he thought it necessary to dwell on intuition first "out of scruple of method." His radical skepticism is largely methodological, a device for getting rid of consciousness as such in the theory of natural knowledge. Accordingly, we find the "animal faith" portion of his system to be a most uncompromising "behaviorism," as such a doctrine has come to be called in America. The act of faith to which, with Hume, he turns, after having made his methodological bow to skepticism, is "animal" not only in James's sense of being an act of animal intelligence; it is for Santayana now an overt, objective system of gestures, communications, social mechanisms. It is through *actions* or physical movements that attitudes become cognitive for our knowledge both of ourselves and of others. For consciousness of essences or pure intuition does not imply self-consciousness. As the theory of intuitive knowledge is based wholly on the internal relations among essences, so existential knowledge is based wholly on the external relations among natural bodies. It is Santayana's behavioristic theory of animal faith and existential knowledge that has contributed notably to the literature of American realism and new naturalism.

But Santayana himself continued to cultivate his systematic dualism to the end, and to sharpen in practice as well as in theory the contrast between a life of detachment and an involvement in practical knowledge. And as he became increasingly a recluse, he increasingly glorified his liberation from "powers and dominations." In one of his last books, *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*, in which he gratified his long-felt desire to portray the *transfigured* Saviour, he dwells on that part of the life of Christ which intervened between the Resur-

rection and the Ascension, when, as Santayana says, "he had one foot on earth and the other in heaven." Such a life appears to Santayana not only divine, but also humanly fine:

Does it not begin to appear that the solitude of a naked spirit may be rather well peopled? In proportion as we renounce our animal claims and commitments, do we not breathe a fresher and more salubrious air? May not the renunciation of everything disinfect everything and return everything to us in its impartial reality, at the same time disinfecting our wills also, and rendering us capable of charity? <sup>4</sup>

In America, too, there is a wide response to a saintly appeal of this kind, but we are far from the spirit of American realism when we yield to such enticements.

<sup>4</sup> In "Ultimate Religion," an address in honor of Spinoza.

### III

## THE PRAGMATIC MEETING OF MINDS

In his essay of 1904, "Does Consciousness Exist?" and in his subsequent essays in "radical empiricism" William James bluntly repudiated the dualistic philosophy which he had taken for granted as a "neo-Kantian" and proceeded to undermine what he conceived to be the last stronghold of dualism, namely, the distinction between objective and subjective. The same "items" or "things" might function subjectively or objectively depending on how they are related. With a relational view of consciousness, James was now no longer a naive realist. Instead of making a common-sense distinction between "the existential plenum" and the "chaos of sense experience," he now invented a new category, which would embrace both and which by definition would be neither objective nor subjective; this "neutral" entity he called "pure" experience. This was his empirical substitute for substance.

James had been speculating in this direction ever since he had admitted the need for an intelligible theory of the compounding of consciousness, and this new category of "pure experience" seemed to solve his problem because he could translate the difficulties that arose from the metaphor of compounding mental states into distinctions among relational systems. Relations, as he had argued in his early essays against idealism, may be subjectively experienced without ceasing to be objective realities. He could now reinterpret his theory of the stream of thought in terms of a theory of the variety of contexts or relational systems into which "pure" or immediate content could be arranged for different cognitive purposes. But the metaphor of "pure" or "immediate" experience was unfortunate for his realism; it led him to interpret this neutral

realm psychologically in terms of emotional experience. Emotions are not thoughts, and hence are not "mental" in the conventional sense. James called them "affectional facts" and argued that such facts are of the greatest metaphysical significance because they are "closer to reality" than the concepts of discursive knowledge and science. The theory that feelings are substantial has a considerable background and James, aware of these connotations, realized the romantic implications of his radical empiricism. A few metaphysicians, notably Whitehead, tried to make scientific use of this idea, but the great majority of American realists repudiated it because of its subjective and romantic taint. They preferred the language of "neutral monism."

Meanwhile, realizing that this doctrine of pure experience was merely adding confusion in the already confused camp of empiricism, some of James's friends, notably C. A. Strong and Dickinson Miller, came to his rescue with a suggestion derived from pragmatic method. They urged him to get away from his preoccupation as a psychologist with immediacy and to develop a pragmatic theory of *common objects*. They called his attention to the fact that in an early article he himself had described the way in which several minds can have common objects. Why not, on pragmatic grounds, regard the world as perceived in common! The common world is not so much a world of feeling, nor of beliefs, but a context held jointly by many observers for locating their perceived objects, and this locating process can be explained objectively, socially. James accepted this suggestion with enthusiasm and tried to incorporate it into his radical empiricism. If my candle goes out when you blow out your candle, why may we not say that we have a candle in common? In practical fact, explained James, our minds meet when our candles behave in this manner. This explanation of the pragmatic meeting of minds now took the place in James's philosophy of his worries about the compounding of consciousness. And curiously, he called this doctrine "natural realism." It helped many of his friends and followers to link realism with pragmatic method, but James

himself apparently failed to see the relation between his pragmatism and his "natural realism."

However, the general effect of this turn of doctrine for both James and his fellow realists was to bring their philosophies closer to the physical sciences. James pointed out that however private our perceptual objects may be, we locate them in a public space. Pragmatically speaking, it is not true, as Russell and Whitehead have argued, that we first locate our perceptions in a private space and then learn to correlate our space with the spaces of other minds. Our differences of perspective are public differences and presuppose a common perspective space or frame of reference. Thus James explained that there is no difficulty in believing in a "numerically identical content of two or more minds."<sup>1</sup>

Such ideas opened up a new world for exploration and urged on American realists to forsake their epistemological preoccupation with problems of perception and to follow along the lines already well established in the philosophy of science on the continent of Europe. They paved the way for an empiricism of relations, a new relativism. William James, just because he arrived at these ideas through psychological considerations, played a pivotal role in linking empiricism and realism in America. It is historically important to note that in America, more than elsewhere, a "natural realism" was achieved by means of a "radical empiricism." The enlargement of the idea of experience to include not only the emotional realm but also the realm of common action enabled American realism to cling to its loyalty to empirical method. The "physical" realism, as some of its adherents prefer to call it, at which James and other Americans arrived was not a naive realism, nor was it an attitude "natural" to Americans; it was a laborious, technical achievement.

<sup>1</sup> William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (New York, 1912), p. 85.

## IV

### SIX EMBATTLED REALISTS

In 1910, that is, about the time of James's death, several of his former students launched a concerted attack on idealism. Idealism was still firmly entrenched in academic circles. At Harvard Josiah Royce was still its militant champion. The Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell was flourishing and was sending young disciples of Bosanquet to academic posts throughout the land. The newly formed American Philosophical Association was under idealist leadership. Instead of feeling shaken by the pragmatists and by the great popularity of William James, the idealists readily exploited the confusion and "subjectivism" created by pragmatist appeals and presented absolute idealism as the only bulwark of objectivity in philosophy. A band of young realists saw their opportunity: they would snatch the banner of objectivism from the idealists.

The leader of this group was Ralph Barton Perry of Harvard. He had been gratified by the cordial way in which James had moved toward realism, and specifically toward the kind of realism which Perry had worked out. Perry was eager to get philosophy out of the context of introspective psychology and epistemology in order to affiliate it with the more objective sciences, particularly the natural sciences and the new logic of relations. Early in 1910 he published in the *Journal of Philosophy* the opening gun of his campaign, an article entitled "The Ego-centric Predicament." It was a declaration of independence from idealistic method, and the declaration was justified by an argument which may be summed up as follows:

As a subject I am obviously seeking an object. Whatever I find is *ipso facto* my own object. Therefore nothing can be discovered that is not "given" to me or to some other subject. Anything known must be known to somebody; it is impossible to eliminate the knower from the known. This

obvious fact describes the general process or situation of knowing, but when it is generalized, as by idealists, as a statement about *what* is known, it becomes trivial. It means merely that whatever is known is known. From this it does not follow, despite the idealists, that all things are known, nor that they exist only as objects of subjects. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the situation of knowing, where the ego-centric predicament is genuine, and other types of existence that are known; for among the relations known is the relation of independence. In other words, it is possible, in spite of the ego-centric predicament, to discover the difference between independent and dependent objects. Hence the ego-centric predicament is not ontological, and metaphysics is not dependent on a theory of knowledge.

The aim of this argument was obvious. American realists were willing to discuss the problems of perception and subjectivity as a special field in the larger domain of metaphysical analysis; but they were unwilling to reduce beings to objects or subjects, and unwilling to reduce all relations to cognitive relations. They were not denying their egos, but hereafter they would not make them central: they would engage in an objective analysis of relations. They were weary of the idealism-centric predicament.

Perry was joined by William Pepperell Montague, formerly a student with Perry at Harvard, then Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, by E. B. Holt, an anti-introspection psychologist, and by three others, whose subsequent publications were of less importance for the realistic movement. The editors of the *Journal of Philosophy*, F. J. E. Woodbridge and Wendell T. Bush, both ready for a polemic against idealism, gave liberal space in their journal to these realists. Montague published an article on "The New Realism and the Old" which was likewise a declaration of impatience with idealistic method. And on July 21, 1910, there appeared in the *Journal of Philosophy* "The Program and First Platform of Six Realists."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Later published as an appendix to *The New Realism* (New York, 1912). See pp. 35ff. in this edition.



As a first act of co-operation the six "little realists," as they were dubbed by Royce and Santayana, formulated doctrines which they held in common: metaphysics is independent of epistemology; many entities are in no sense conditioned on their being known; pluralism is more probable than monism; logic can dispense with "internal relations"; subsistences or concepts are equally real with existences. All these doctrines were directed against idealism and amounted to little more than a summary of the grounds on which they had rejected it. But the common platform of the six realists was evidently not very strong, for these principles were not stated in common: each of the six preferred to put them in his own way, though all agreed that they were trying to say the same thing. Skeptics suspected too much pluralism in this realist attack.

Within two years a book appeared by the six realists: *The New Realism, Co-operative Studies in Philosophy*. The preface stated: "The present volume continues, on a larger scale, the work inaugurated by our Program and First Platform; and we hope it will be followed by other collections of studies." "Collections of studies" was a more accurate description of this work than "co-operative studies." Each essay represents the work done on some special topic by its author; all are in a broad sense realistic, but they are neither connected nor wholly compatible. A few of them aroused interest and comment, but on the whole the volume seems to have had few readers. The introductory essay by Perry and Montague develops a little more fully and systematically the "first platform" and "the realistic program of reform." The other essays are apparently very "objective," technical, specialized, and too dull for a program of reform. The co-operative program failed to develop; no further publication by the six as a group appeared. The concerted attack soon died out and the group disintegrated. Many years later both Perry and Montague asked themselves and each other, "What ever became of our program of reform?" Undoubtedly "the New Realism" thus went down in American history, but it seemed never to have grown into a single being.

Nevertheless, as a short, decisive battle the New Realism of the six was a success. Idealism was put on the defensive and became increasingly defensive. Whether the subsequent work of the realists be called realism or not, the enthusiasm for independent, objective research in philosophy, free from idealistic epistemology and absolutism, became prevalent and transformed the dominant temper and themes of philosophical thought for a whole generation. To describe the work of this generation, it is necessary to tell of the work of individual "realists," for neither these six "neo-realists," as they came to be called, nor the rival group of "critical realists" are noteworthy as unified groups or "schools." To a large extent the "reform atmosphere" was a tribute to the effectiveness of William James in "loosening up" philosophic discussion and thought. These men were working, as Perry said, "in the spirit of William James" even when they were not following his ideas. The pan-objectivism of the movement was by no means a pale vestige of nineteenth-century "scientism"; it was a fresh creation, a constructive revolt.

Ralph Barton Perry undertook as his first major task of objective analysis to show that purposive behavior could be studied and defined through ordinary observational methods of biology and that there is no reason why one must follow James's habit of always referring to purposes or preferences as "subjective" facts. In a series of articles he made a thoroughly behavioristic discrimination between purposive and nonpurposive acts. Having done this, he was prepared to construct a general theory of values in terms of *observed interests*. A human interest, whether social or not, permanent or fleeting, can be related to other interests or values. From interests come obstacles as well as values. The conflict of interests, the organization of interests, the systems of values, etc.—all constituted a field for factual study, to which Perry devoted most of his life. Perry's ethics and general theory of value thus became one of the substantial achievements of American realism, which was able to meet effectively the conventional ideal-

istic ethics, according to which interests and values were regarded as antithetical. Perry's systematic analysis of values as the fulfillment of interests represents not only a direct challenge to idealism, but also an attempt to reconstruct utilitarianism on an objective basis.

William Pepperell Montague made a number of contributions to realism and was a prominent defender of realistic metaphysics and theory of knowledge on many occasions, in opposition to both idealism and pragmatism. However, his most characteristic contribution, the one on which he himself laid most stress, was his materialistic theory of conscious energy. He defended the hypothesis, on experimental grounds, that as an existent reality consciousness is a form of potential energy.<sup>2</sup> He regarded such a theory of consciousness as being important for the general development of realism because he disagreed with James on the subject of the nonexistence of consciousness, and differed from most of his neo-realist colleagues who gave consciousness a relational interpretation; he thought it must be possible to identify it as a specific, material energy. He did not object to functional studies of conscious behavior, such as Perry's, but he thought the functions could be given physiological explanations. In general, Montague and Roy Wood Sellars represent the materialist wing of the realist movement, but their materialisms are not identical and materialism in general has played a minor role in American realistic thought. Both Montague and Sellars were much more influential through their other contributions to the movement—Montague as a speculative naturalist, and Sellars as a militant humanist.

In contrast to the group of so-called neo-realists, who wished to turn their backs on epistemology and who had no special interest in psychology, was the group of "critical" realists, who continued to be preoccupied with the psychology of perception and the problem of the relation of experience to the external world. Of these I shall mention only two, though the

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *The New Realism*, pp. 284-85.

group was probably larger than the neo-realist group, for their work was less of an innovation and they professed less co-operation.

Charles Augustus Strong, formerly Professor of Psychology at Columbia University but at the time of our story living in retired splendor at Paris and Fiesole, had become noted as the author of *Why the Mind Has a Body*. This was a very serious, well-informed piece of psychological analysis, which, partly because the author had a delicate and ironical sense of humor, partly because the work was supposed to be purely psychological, was not taken very seriously by philosophers. Unperturbed, Strong worked out in his social and intellectual solitude a detailed "projection" theory of perception. Seeing that his contemporaries were obsessed with the notion that phenomena are mere data or presentations, he announced that he expected no converts for the next fifty years—not until the presentation idea had worn itself out. In opposition to conventional phenomenalism, he explained that the so-called "given" was more of a literal *Vorstellung* than the German Kantians realized, and more symbolical in its nature than the French *représentation* suggested. He explained that we feel objects not *in* our sense organs, but merely *by means* of them; objects are felt at a distance and are located in a perspective space by our sense organs in such a way that, if our body wished to make direct contact (touch) with them, they would be located where they really are. In other words, he conceived sense experience to be basically motor reaction accompanied by a device (perception-perspective) for translating onto a three-dimensional perspective screen, which is not a physical reality, the effects which physical objects stimulate in us. We imagine that we see objects where they really are, but our seeing is symbolical.

As Strong was preoccupied with spatial perception, Arthur O. Lovejoy of the Johns Hopkins University was preoccupied with temporal perception. He anticipated some of Sartre's analyses in showing how the absent is made present. The presentation of past and future is, according to him, the essential

function of experience. Hence the course of experience and the course of events are two quite different temporal structures. This insight led Lovejoy to become the champion of a dualistic philosophy at a time when the majority of American philosophers were revolting against dualism. He began by attacking what he called "the thirteen pragmatisms," trying to prove that the pragmatic theories and confusions were evasions of the real problem of knowledge. He ended by publishing his major polemical work, *The Revolt against Dualism*, in which he tried to show that the various attempts made by naturalists, experimentalists, and realists to evade dualism had proved to be failures.

Whether they are failures or not, the fact remains that the majority of recent American philosophers have shifted their attention from the problem of knowledge as it had been exploited and formulated by idealism and have turned to what seemed to them more constructive tasks. They became convinced that the genuine problems of perception, sense-data, and other aspects of what Strong called "the mechanism of consciousness" could safely be left to the physiological psychologists. Philosophy had other problems, more attractive and more general. This attitude is distinctive of American realism, and differentiates it sharply from British realism. "We did not solve the problem," Dewey once confessed, "we got over it."



## OTHER SOURCES OF AMERICAN REALISM

The academic war declared by the six realists in 1910 against the hosts of idealism ended in a clear victory for realism. Realism prospered, became increasingly diversified, richer in content, stronger in personnel, academically more prevalent. Idealism receded, its ranks split in two. The subjective or "mentalist" idealists, who still believed in Bishop Berkeley, were hopelessly outnumbered, being attacked not only by the realists, but also by the powerful branch of objective or "Cornell" idealists, the so-called "speculative philosophers." These speculative idealists were disconcertingly hospitable to the realist objectivism. They, too, believed that mind is an objective structure; they, too, were weary of the psychology of perception; they were willing to rest their case on logical grounds. Of course, they admitted, objects are independent of being perceived, but are the causal relations in terms of which we *conceive* objects independent of logical relations? To many realists this seemed like a surrender of the idealist cause. As J. B. Pratt said, "the idealists turned out to be logical realists," with whom many of the realists were willing to agree. Though this issue split the realists, too, they could afford disunion better than could the idealists. Meanwhile the pragmatist attack had weakened the idealist theory of the Absolute, and with the decline of the Absolute such idealism lost much of its popular support because it no longer had a "religious aspect." However, this tactical victory over idealism failed to provide the realists with a positive program on which they could unite. They had counted on years of tilting with windmills; what to do next!

In 1914 a war broke over America, from what had been thought to be an "external" world, which threw this academic

contest into the shade and which made it necessary for American philosophers to achieve a broader cultural base. The realism that flowered in the 1930's, though it had some continuity with the realism of 1910, was more directly a product of the cultural crisis, a product of America's searching for its intellectual and moral resources. The crisis brought about a *rapprochement* of schools of thought that had been thought to be incompatible, and it created a genuine philosophical concern in new theoretical issues to which the old "schools" were largely irrelevant. These issues were not the immediate political and international problems created by the World War and the Depression; what little Americans achieved in the way of constructing a national ideology had a minimum of philosophical orientation. The problems to which American philosophers turned between the wars were perhaps even more speculative and theoretical than before—problems of logic and language, of metaphysics and ontology, of humanism and naturalism. To call this ferment in philosophical thought by the name of "realism" may be an unjustifiably loose use of the term. But any other -ism would be a still less appropriate label. The thinking that emerged has no technical name and little formal unity, but even at this short historical distance it appears on the scene as something genuinely American. It is not a national philosophy; it was not nationally self-conscious; but it was a process of stock-taking among American thinkers. American philosophers for the first time really got together and, even though they seldom co-operated, they all tried, with what materials they had at hand, to lay new and better foundations—not for America, not for the world, but for philosophy. Philosophical inquiry became in itself a serious, professional, technical achievement in American culture; and American philosophers achieved the kind of self-reliance for which Emerson had prayed and which enabled them to build for themselves significant foundations and a few structures that might even be exported.

It is impossible for me, and probably for any of my contemporaries, to sketch a general portrait of the American



realism that culminated in the 1930's and that now seems to be passing into something different, I know not what. It may be that the future will make little use of the foundations laboriously laid during those years; but the future course of thought will not change the fact that during those years foundations were being laid. Of the other founders of American realism, besides those discussed in the preceding chapter, I shall mention only four: Charles S. Peirce (who, though dead physically, became philosophically very lively during these years), F. J. E. Woodbridge, John Dewey, and George H. Mead. The first two laid the foundations for a realistic philosophy of logic and natural law; the last two gave Americans a realistic social philosophy, including both a theory of social change and a theory of the organization and communication of intelligence. The first two are representative of the naturalistic wing, the latter two of the humanistic wing.

Peirce, in addition to his foundational work in symbolic logic and pragmatic method, certainly was the first American realist. As early as 1871 he consciously repudiated the nominalism of British empiricism and idealism and gave a realistic interpretation to the work of Kant on the categories. He spoke then as if he were a disciple of Duns Scotus, but he soon appeared to be no one's disciple. He realized even in his early work that the issue between nominalism and realism is more than logical—it is moral and social as well. He tried to construct a generalized theory of generality. His insistence on the triadic structure of knowledge—sign, object (or meaning), interpreter—was an important factor in transferring interest from the theory of perception and of the subject-object relationship to the theory of communication, language, and logic. His realistic theory of universals was that the *general* meaning of a proposition can be reduced to a series of particular applications to “laboratory” conditions, and hence the cognitive value of an idea would be its value as an experimental hypothesis. It implied that both the meaning and the truth of an idea would need to be worked out by a community of competent inquirers—that is, by those who were able to devise experi-



mental tests for it. The meaning would be measured by the series of experiments; the truth would be measured by the convergence of opinion within the community of scientists or experimental observers of that idea. Peirce thus laid the foundations for two themes of American realism: (1) he conceived the theory of universals to be a part of natural science, and (2) he regarded his system of categories as an experimental metaphysics, that is, as both the formal analysis of scientific procedure and as an ontology.

Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, though he came to realism by a very different route, emphasized precisely these same two aspects of realism. Though trained as a neo-Kantian, he became increasingly an Aristotelian. He attempted to state in modern terms and for modern science a "first philosophy," that is, a theory of the most general traits of being. He found the most general framework for such a theory to be "the field of logic" or "the universe of discourse." His vigorous defense of the unity of logic and ontology made him the leader of a group of realists, who, though they were not primarily logicians, believed that a realistic philosophy must rest on a theory of logical structure rather than on the psychology of knowing.

Basic to Woodbridge's realism was his distinction between subject matter and substance—between *to hypokeimenon* and *ousia* in Aristotelian terms. Woodbridge interpreted *to hypokeimenon* not as "the given," and certainly not as the "substratum" of the given, but as a designation for all possible objects of speech and inquiry. This universe of discourse is all-inclusive, and hence its structure is most general; within it arise all distinctions and types of being. This universe can be approached through speech, but it includes other aspects or frameworks which man learns to discriminate as distinct "worlds," such as the world of substance or matter, the visible world of the natural environment, and the world of human hopes, fears, and the pursuit of happiness, which is the realm of values. Thus three of the four dimensions of human being are objective, real structures.

The widest of these worlds, the universe of discourse, Wood-

bridge called "transcendental mind,"<sup>1</sup> partly because he found Santayana's use of the term instructive, partly because he wanted to exploit idealism for realistic purposes. In the mechanical world, the world of matter, he recognized both natural teleology and the processes of man's "thinking machine." The third order, the visible world, is the world of optical perspective. Woodbridge believed that space is optical rather than Euclidean; or, more accurately, he believed that the world of vision in which parallel lines converge to the horizon is equally objective and co-ordinate with the world of motion in which parallel lines never meet. In the visible world, as in the world of motion, location involves an infinite number of perspectives, none of which is privileged. There is no absolute point of view, though the structure of perspectives is itself absolute. Over against these three objective realms Woodbridge set the realm of human values, where man is a creator; but man is creative only as he learns to adjust his values to the other realms of his being.

The realisms of Peirce and Woodbridge met in the person of Morris R. Cohen. Cohen, who was himself an able logician and a very influential teacher, succeeded in making a synthesis of these two systems, both as a philosophy of nature and also as a philosophy of human affairs. His realism was especially important for the development of American realistic jurisprudence. Through Cohen and his students this kind of realistic naturalism became a distinctive trend in recent American thought. This trend represents in general the rationalistic wing of the realist movement, one of whose aims is to apply a combination of logical methods and the experimental sciences to all problems, notably to the social and moral sciences.

John Dewey's work, like Peirce's, surpasses what I am here calling "realism," and Dewey was critical of many of the technical doctrines of the realistic theories of knowledge and metaphysics. Nevertheless, he contributed more to the move-

<sup>1</sup> See especially *Nature and Mind* (New York, 1937), pp. 165, 171-72.

ment than did William James. He was never a naive realist, as James professed to be, for from the start he had a theory of reality which made his conception of experience and of empirical method quite different from that of James. Following Morris and Trendelenburg, he became a critic of Hegel's dialectical theory of thought, and conceived the world in terms of categories of movement or reconstructive activity. Change is an ultimate reality, and the categories of being must be, he thought, like Aristotle's categories, categories of movement, including movements of thought. Like Trendelenburg, he subordinated the theory of the syllogism to the theory of actualization, and actualization to reconstruction. It was easy for Dewey, especially after his discovery of the biological psychology of William James, to interpret "activity" naturalistically and biologically. Thus, according to Dewey, man and all his acts are an inherent part of the natural world of action. The ultimate category of the real is "affairs" (the Latin *res*); man exists *in medias res*. The doings and sufferings of mankind are inseparable from the more general world of change, and it is impossible to draw more than a pragmatic line between the physical and the mental acts, or between the external and the internal phases of activity.

This realistic conception of what he called "the existential matter of experience" can be found in his earliest as well as his latest writings.<sup>2</sup> To sharpen the point, he adopted during his last years the concepts of the "transactions" among things, in place of the traditional idea of interactions; it is not only man that "transacts" his affairs, for even physical actions are forms of involvement and interpenetration. Because he held this theory of reality, he never took the world of common sense for granted, and he gave critical reasons for dismissing the problem of the existence of the so-called external world.

As a moralist, Dewey's contribution to realism was his constant insistence on the danger of isolating special activities,

<sup>2</sup> See John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, *Knowing and the Known* (Boston, 1949), pp. 272-84.

such as those of thinking, from the larger matrix of objective activities of the world. The institutionalization of activities is intelligible and justifiable as a process of co-ordination and objective realization; but the danger, to which he points repeatedly, is that the technical perfection and professionalization of activities may act as a barrier to communication and create isolated interests and values. His general technique of evaluation was to place any particular interest into a larger context of related activities, trusting to this larger context to operate as a criterion for judging special interests. He taught ethics not as an isolated subject matter, but as a realistic examination of the norms which actual conditions are continually generating for the adaptation of habitual conduct to new circumstances. He made an effective analysis of the interrelation of legislation-litigation-judicial decision in the process of experimental testing of legal norms. His faith in democracy was grounded in his conviction that publicity, that is, the open recognition of the sources and consequences of social relations and conflicts, is the most effective agency of control. His ethics was neither a morality of maxims or imperatives, nor a utilitarian calculation of consequences, but a search for actual interests and values that are allowed to remain neglected or hidden by dominant interests and values; by making public or conscious these submerged or suppressed factors, a "closed society" transforms itself into an open society, and traditional norms are reformed on the basis of actual demands. Because of his realistic habits of analysis, Dewey avoided "normative" ethics; pure norms, he thought, were powerless, and imposed legislation he regarded as more or less arbitrary and hence ineffective. His emphasis on experimental validation, in other words, was an aspect of his realism as much as of his pragmatism.

George H. Mead, during his years of collaboration with Dewey at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan, shared this social realism with Dewey. But after Dewey left Chicago for Columbia University, Mead developed

this social philosophy into a general theory of natural processes and history, in a way which Dewey never attempted. This system came to be known as "objective relativism" and has played a leading role in the realistic theory of nature.

This philosophy is based on the theory of the co-ordination of perspectives. Just as a "social act" such as a gesture or other attempt at communication involves the ability of the participants in the act to shift from one perspective to another, so the meaningfulness of natural processes depends on the range of translatability of perspectives. Mead thought that the basic type of correlation of perspectives is to be found in temporal experience—the reconstruction of the interpretation of the past as the present shifts from one perspective to another. As the present changes "new pasts arise behind us." Though Mead did not live to work out his theory carefully, he made a sketch of it in his *The Philosophy of the Present* (1932), in which he tried to assimilate natural knowledge to historical knowledge. "The world is a world of events," he began, and all events take place in a present. The past and future are always relative to same present, and as long as the present is subject to change, history must be reinterpreted. He tried to link this doctrine of "objective relativity" in historical knowledge with relativity in physical science, and criticized Samuel Alexander, Minkowski, and others for accepting a four-dimensional continuum of point-instants in space-time as an absolute frame of reference. A genuine "emergent evolutionism" would be more thoroughly relativistic, he claimed. Such a continuum seemed to him as much of an abstraction as the theory of atoms of duration out of which a present could be constructed. He proposed to deal with the *real* present in both historical and natural processes. Hence he welcomed a relativistic theory of distance, for such relativism in spatial interpretation extends "the field of action" or the "area of manipulation" in terms of which past and present are related. All facts are facts of passage, and such facts are "given" only to the extent that they are related to the past of a present or to

its future. All being, accordingly, is the becoming of the past in the present due to the changed perspectives created by facts of passage.

In other words, Mead's philosophy of the present is the objective counterpart to James's doctrine of "the specious present." In the stream of consciousness, in the present, the stream of events becomes meaningful objectively, because perspectives are thereby generated and correlated.

Mead's ambitious attempt to combine the theory of "sociality" and the theory of physical relativity has received little further development in American realism, and it may not prove to be as broad a foundation for future work as it seemed to be while Mead was working on it. It is worth recording here, in any case, as an illustration of the kind of philosophical construction in which American realism became involved. This kind of synthesis has been complicated for Americans by the impact of Whitehead's philosophy. Perhaps this philosophy, too, should be included as a major component of the American realistic movement. I have excluded it on the ground that its basic features were imported from England, and in the belief that its current vogue may be a "fact of passage." But I am now confessing that this realist movement is still in motion, and that it is really too soon to try to depict it in its entirety and in its outcome. There is more to the story, which time will tell, and which may some day be told by a historian who has a more adequate perspective on it.

## Part Two

## ❧ VI ❧

### THE PROGRAM AND FIRST PLATFORM OF SIX REALISTS<sup>1</sup>

Philosophy is famous for its disagreements, which have contributed not a little toward bringing it into disrepute as being unscientific, subjective, or temperamental. These disagreements are due in part, no doubt, to the subject matter of philosophy, but chiefly to the lack of precision and uniformity in the use of words and to the lack of deliberate co-operation in research. In having these failings philosophy still differs widely from such sciences as physics and chemistry. They tend to make it seem mere opinion, for through the appearance of many figurative or loose expressions in the writings of isolated theorists, the impression is given that philosophical problems and their solutions are essentially personal. This impression is strengthened by the fact that philosophy concerns itself with emotions, temperaments, and taste. A conspicuous result of this lack of co-operation, common terminology, and a working agreement as to fundamental presuppositions is that genuine philosophical problems have been obscured, and real philosophical progress has been seriously hindered.

It is therefore with the hope that by co-operation genuine problems will be revealed, philosophical thought will be clarified, and a way opened for real progress, that the undersigned have come together, deliberated, and endeavored to reach an agreement. Such co-operation has three fairly distinct, though not necessarily successive stages: first, it seeks a statement of fundamental principles and doctrines; secondly, it aims at a program of constructive work following a method founded on these principles and doctrines; finally, it endeavors to obtain

<sup>1</sup> [First published in *The Journal of Philosophy*, VII, No. 15 (July, 1910), 393-401.]



a system of axioms, methods, hypotheses, and facts, which have been so arrived at and formulated that at least those investigators who have co-operated can accept them as a whole.

After several conferences the undersigned have found that they hold certain doctrines in common. Some of these doctrines, which constitute a realistic platform, they herewith publish in the hope of carrying out further the program stated above. Each list has a different author, but has been discussed at length, revised, and agreed to by the other conferees. The six lists, therefore, though differently formulated, are held to represent the same doctrines.

By conferring on other topics, by interchange of ideas, and by systematic criticism of one another's phraseology, methods, and hypotheses, we hope to develop a common technique, a common terminology, and so finally a common doctrine which will enjoy some measure of that authority which the natural sciences possess. We shall have accomplished one of our purposes if our publications tempt other philosophers to form small co-operative groups with similar aims.

EDWIN B. HOLT, Harvard University  
WALTER T. MARVIN, Rutgers College  
W. P. MONTAGUE, Columbia University  
RALPH BARTON PERRY, Harvard University  
WALTER B. PITKIN, Columbia University  
E. G. SPAULDING, Princeton University

## I

1. The entities (objects, facts, etc.) under study in logic, mathematics, and the physical sciences are not mental in any usual or proper meaning of the word "mental."
2. The being and nature of these entities are in no sense conditioned by their being known.
3. The degree of unity, consistency, or connection subsisting among entities is a matter to be empirically ascertained.

4. In the present stage of our knowledge there is a presumption in favor of pluralism.

5. An entity subsisting in certain relations to other entities enters into new relations without necessarily negating or altering its already subsisting relations.

6. No self-consistent or satisfactory logic (or system of logic) so far invented countenances the "organic" theory of knowledge or the "internal" view of relations.

7. Those who assert this (anti-realistic) view use in their exposition a logic which is inconsistent with their doctrine.

EDWIN B. HOLT

## II

1. Epistemology is not logically fundamental.<sup>2</sup>

2. There are many existential, as well as non-existential, propositions which are logically prior to epistemology.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Some of the principles of logic are logically prior to any proposition that is deduced from other propositions. The theories of the nature of knowledge and of the relation of knowledge to its object are for this reason logically subsequent to the principles of logic. In short, logic is logically prior to any epistemological theory. Again, as theories of reality are deduced and are made to conform to the laws of logic they too are logically subsequent to logic; and in so far as logic is logically present in them it is itself a theory or part of a theory of reality.

<sup>3</sup> The terms "knowledge," "consciousness," and "experience" found in common sense and in psychology are not logically fundamental, but are logically subsequent to parts at least of a theory of reality that asserts the existence of terms and relations which are not consciousness or experience. E.g., the psychical is distinguished from the physical and the physiological.

Now idealism has not shown that the terms "knowledge," "consciousness," and "experience" of its epistemology or of its theory of reality are logically fundamental or indefinable, nor has it succeeded in defining them without logically prior terms that are elsewhere explicitly excluded from its theory of reality. In short, idealistic epistemologists have borrowed the terms "knowledge," "consciousness," and "experience" from psychology, but have ignored or denied the propositions in psychology that are logically prior. In other words, epistemology has not thus far

3. There are certain principles of logic which are logically prior to all scientific and metaphysical systems.

One of these is that which is usually called the external view of relations.

4. This view may be stated thus: In the proposition, "the term  $a$  is in the relation  $R$  to the term  $b$ ,"  $aR$  in no degree constitutes  $b$ , nor does  $Rb$  constitute  $a$ , nor does  $R$  constitute either  $a$  or  $b$ .

5. It is possible to add new propositions to some bodies of information without thereby requiring any modification of those bodies of information.

6. There are no propositions which are (accurately speaking) partly true and partly false, for all such instances can be logically analyzed into at least two propositions one of which is true and the other false. Thus as knowledge advances only two modifications of any proposition of the older knowledge are logically possible; it can be rejected as false or it can be analyzed into at least two propositions one of which is rejected.

As corollaries of the foregoing:

7. The nature of reality can not be inferred merely from the nature of knowledge.

8. The entities under study in logic, mathematics, physics, and many other sciences are not mental in any proper or usual meaning of the word mental.

9. The proposition, "This or that object is known," does not imply that such object is conditioned by the knowing. In other words, it does not force us to infer that such object is spiritual, that it exists only as the experiential content of some mind, or that it may not be ultimately real just as known.

WALTER T. MARVIN

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made itself logically independent of psychology nor has it freed itself logically from the common-sense dualism of psychology. On the contrary, epistemology from Locke until today has been and has remained, in part at least, a branch of psychology.

## III

A. *The Meaning of Realism.*

1. Realism holds that things known may continue to exist unaltered when they are not known, or that things may pass in and out of the cognitive relation without prejudice to their reality, or that the existence of a thing is not correlated with or dependent upon the fact that anybody experiences it, perceives it, conceives it, or is in any way aware of it.

2. Realism is opposed to subjectivism or epistemological idealism which denies that things can exist apart from an experience of them, or independently of the cognitive relation.

3. The point at issue between realism and idealism should not be confused with the points at issue between materialism and spiritualism, automatism and interactionism, empiricism and rationalism, or pluralism and absolutism.

B. *The Opposition to Realism.* Among the various classic refutations of realism the following fallacious assumptions and inferences are prominent:

1. The Physiological Argument: The mind can have for its direct object only its own ideas or states, and external objects, if they exist at all, can only be known indirectly by a process of inference, of questionable validity and doubtful utility. This principle is fallacious because a knowing process is never its own object, but is rather the means by which some other object is known. The object thus known or referred to may be another mental state, a physical thing, or a merely logical entity.

2. The Intuitionist Argument: This argument stands out most prominently in the philosophy of Berkeley. It has two forms. The first consists of a confused identification of a truism and an absurdity. The truism: *We can only know that objects exist when they are known.* The absurdity: *We know that objects can only exist when they are known.* The second

form of the arguments derives its force from a play upon the word "idea," as follows: *Every "idea" (meaning a mental process or state) is incapable of existing apart from a mind; every known entity is an "idea" (meaning an object of thought); therefore, every known entity is incapable of existing apart from the mind.* It is to the failure to perceive these fallacies that idealism owes its supposedly axiomatic character.

3. The Physiological Argument: Because the sensations we receive determine what objects we shall know, therefore the objects known are constructs or products of our perceptual experience. The fallacy here consists in arguing from the true premise that sensations are the *ratio cognoscendi* of the external world, to the false conclusion that they are therefore its *ratio fiendi* or *essendi*.

### C. The Implications of Realism.

1. Cognition is a peculiar type of relation which may subsist between a living being and any entity.

2. Cognition belongs to the same world as that of its objects. It has its place in the order of nature. There is nothing transcendental or supernatural about it.

3. The extent to which consciousness pervades nature, and the conditions under which it may arise and persist, are questions which can be solved, if at all, only by the methods of empiricism and naturalism.

WILLIAM PEPPERELL MONTAGUE

## IV

1. The object or content of consciousness is any entity in so far as it is responded to by another entity in a specific manner exhibited by the reflex nervous system. Thus physical nature, for example, is, under certain circumstances, directly present in consciousness.

In its historical application, this means that Cartesian dual-

ism and the representative theory are false; and that attempts to overcome these by reducing mind and nature to one another or to some third substance, are gratuitous.

2. The specific response which determines an entity to be content of consciousness does not directly modify such entities otherwise than to endow them with this content status. In other words, consciousness selects from a field of entities which it does not create.

In its historical application, this implies the falsity of Berkeleyan and post-Berkeleyan idealism in so far as this asserts that consciousness is a general *ratio essendi*.

3. The response which determines an entity to be content may itself be responded to and made content in like manner. In other words, the difference between subject and object of consciousness is not a difference of quality or substance, but a difference of office or place in a configuration.

In its historical application, this implies the falsity not only of the Cartesian dualism, but of all idealistic dualisms that, because they regard subject and object as non-interchangeable, conclude that the subject is either unknowable, or knowable only in some unique way such as intuitively or reflexively.

4. The same entity possesses both immanence, by virtue of its membership in one class, and also transcendence, by virtue of the fact that it may belong also to indefinitely many other classes. In other words, immanence and transcendence are compatible and not contradictory predicates.

In its historical application, this implies the falsity of the subjectivistic argument from the egocentric predicament, i.e., the argument that because entities are content of consciousness they cannot also transcend consciousness; it also implies that, so far as based on such subjectivistic premises, the idealistic theory of a transcendent subjectivity is gratuitous.

5. An entity possesses some relations independently of one another, and the ignorance or discovery of further relations does not invalidate a limited knowledge of relations.

In its historical applications, this implies the falsity of the

contention of absolute idealism that it is necessary to know all of an entity's relations in order to know any of its relations, or that only the whole truth is wholly true.

6. The logical categories of unity, such as homogeneity, consistency, coherence, interrelation, etc., do not in any case imply a determinate degree of unity. Hence the degree of unity which the world possesses can not be determined logically, but only by assembling the results of the special branches of knowledge. On the basis of such evidence, there is a present presumption in favor of the hypothesis that the world as a whole is less unified than are certain of its parts.

In its historical application, this implies that the great speculative monisms, such as those of Plato, Spinoza, and certain modern idealists, are both dogmatic and contrary to the evidence.

RALPH BARTON PERRY

## V

The realist holds that things known are not products of the knowing relation nor essentially dependent for their existence or behavior upon that relation. This doctrine has three claims upon your acceptance: first, it is the natural, instinctive belief of all men, and for this, if for no other reason, puts the burden of proof upon those who would discredit it; secondly, all refutations of it known to the present writer presuppose or even actually employ some of its exclusive implications; and, thirdly, it is logically demanded by all the observations and hypotheses of the natural sciences, including psychology.

Involved more or less intimately in a realistic view are the following:

1. One identical term may stand in many relations.
2. A term may change some of its relations to some other terms without thereby changing all its other relations to those same or to other terms.

3. What relations are changed by a given change of relation can not always be deduced merely from the nature of either the terms involved or their relation.

4. The hypothesis that "there can be no object without a subject" is pure tautology. It is confessedly a description of the cognitive situation only; and it says, in effect, that everything experienced is experienced. It becomes significant only by virtue of the wholly unwarranted assumption that doctrines 1, 2, and 3, above given, are false. This assumption, however, is fatal to the idealist's supposed discovery, inasmuch as it means that there can be no true propositions. In conceding this, the idealist refutes himself.

5. In no body of knowledge, not even in evidences about the nature of the knowledge relation, can we discover that possible knowledge is limited or what its limits may be.

6. Entities are transcendent to the so-called "knowing mind" or "consciousness" only as a term is to the relations in which it may stand, viz., in two radically different manners: first, as the term is not identical with a particular relation in which it stands, so too a thing in the knowledge relation is not the relation itself; secondly, as the term may enter into or go out of a particular relation, without thereby being changed essentially or destroyed, so too can an object of knowledge exist prior to and after its entrance into or removed from the knowledge relation. Transcendence thus means, in the first place, distinctness and, in the second place, functional independence.

7. There may be axiomatic truths or intuitive truths. But the fact that a truth belongs to either of these classes does not make it fundamental or important for a theory of knowledge, much less for a theory of reality. Like all other truths, it too must be interpreted in the light of other relevant truths.

8. Though terms are not modified by being brought into new contexts, this does not imply that an existent cannot be changed by another existent.

WALTER B. PITKIN



## VI

1. Realism, while admitting the tautology that every entity which is known is in relation to knowing or experience or consciousness, holds that this knowing, etc., is eliminable, so that the entity is known as it would be if the knowing were not taking place. Briefly, the entity is, in its being, behavior, and character, independent of the knowing. This position agrees with common sense and with science in holding (1) that not all entities are mental, conscious, or spiritual, and (2) that entities are knowable without being known.

2. The fact that terms are in the cognitive relation does not imply that the terms are mutually dependent on, or capable of modifying, either each other or the relation, any more than this dependence, etc., is implied for any two terms in any other relation. The proposition that there is this dependence, etc., constitutes the "internal view" of relations.<sup>4</sup> Most of those systems which are opposed to realism can be shown to presuppose this "internal view," but this view can be shown to be self-contradictory and to presuppose the "external view."

3. That position which is based in part on the acceptance and the consistent use and development of the implications of those logical doctrines which are presupposed as a condition for any position being stated, argued, and held to be true has, thereby, a strong presumption created in favor of its truth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> To hold the "internal view" means, in my opinion, to hold that, in order that a relation may relate, the relation must either (1) penetrate its terms, or (2) be mediated by an underlying (transcendent) reality. From the penetration there is deduced (a) modification, or (b) similarity, or (c) the generation of a contradiction. Cf. my paper, "The Logical Structure of Self-refuting Systems," *The Philosophical Review*, XIX, No. 3, 277-282.

<sup>5</sup> Such a system I hold to be realism, its chief feature being the interpretation of the cognitive relation in accordance with the "external view." This "external view" can be held to be true quite consistently with itself, and is in this sense, I hold, self-consistent, as is also, in my opinion, real-

4. There is at least one logical doctrine and one principle which are ultimately presupposed by any system which is held to be true. That doctrine is the "external view" of relations, and the principle is that truth is independent of proof, although proof is not independent of truth. The first of these means, briefly:

5. (1) That both a term and a relation are (unchangeable) elements or entities; (2) that a term may stand in one or in many relations to one or many other terms; and (3) that any of these terms and that some of these relations could be absent or that other terms and relations could be present without there being any resulting modification, etc., of the remaining or already present terms or relations.

6. By this "external view" it is made logically possible that the knowing process and its object should be qualitatively dissimilar. (Cf. 1.)

7. The principle (see 4) means that, while on the one hand no proposition is so certain that it can be regarded as exempt from examination, criticism, and the demand for proof, on the other hand, any proposition, if free from self-contradiction, may be true (in some system). In this sense every proposition is tentative, even those of this platform.

*Corollary.*—It is impossible to get a criterion, definition, theory, or content for the concept "absolute" by which it can be absolutely known or proved that any criterion, definition, theory, or content is absolutely true, i.e., is more than tentative. The most that can be claimed for such a criterion, etc., is that it may be absolutely true, although not proved to be.

8. Any entity may be known as it really is in some respects without its being known in all respects and without the other entities to which it is related being known, so that knowledge can increase by *accretion*.

9. Knowing, consciousness, etc., are facts to be investigated

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ism. Accordingly I hold further that realism is not a merely dogmatic system, and that, as self-consistent, it refutes and does not merely contradict certain opposed systems which, as based on the "internal view," are self-refuting.

only in the same way as are other facts, and are not necessarily more important than are other facts.

10. The position stated in this platform, which is a position concerning knowing as well as other things, can apply to itself, as a special instance of knowledge, all its own propositions about knowledge.

EDWARD GLEASON SPAULDING

## ❧ VII ❧

### ORIGIN OF THE PROGRAM AND FIRST PLATFORM<sup>1</sup>

RALPH BARTON PERRY

In 1902, when the American Philosophical Association held its first meeting, the President was James E. Creighton, that sturdy Scotch-Canadian idealist who reigned at Cornell for many years, and inspired both respect and fear among the fledglings. His successors in this office during the next half dozen years, with the exception of Dewey, belonged, broadly speaking, to the school of Kant and recognized their alliance with Green, Caird, and Bradley in England. Even Dewey had not yet wholly outgrown his Hegelian beginnings. At the beginning of the century neither pragmatism nor realism had as yet seriously threatened the reign of this idealistic school. "Studies in Logical Theory," by Dewey and his Chicago group, appeared in 1903; James's essays on "Radical Empiricism" appeared in *The Journal of Philosophy* in 1904 and 1905, and his Lowell Lectures entitled "Pragmatism" not until 1907. At the end of this decade, although the pragmatists were gathering their forces, and the voice of the realists was beginning to be heard in the land, the idealists still spoke with an accent of authority and were listened to with peculiar deference.

At the meeting of the American Philosophical Association held in New Haven in 1909 five of the younger members who either read papers or took part in the discussion, found, quite without premeditation, that they were fighting on the same side against a common foe. To Montague and Walter B. Pitkin, who were colleagues at Columbia, there occurred the pos-

<sup>1</sup> [Extract from an article in *The Journal of Philosophy*, Oct. 14, 1954, pp. 605-6.]

sibility of translating this impromptu polemic into articulate agreement. Walter T. Marvin, later of Rutgers, and Edward G. Spaulding, later of Princeton, were at this time in New York. Letters were circulated among them, and were sent to Edwin B. Holt and to the present writer at Harvard. Woodbridge, with whom Montague and Pitkin were in constant touch, gave advice and encouragement, but he preferred to remain aloof.

In 1910 the six published their "Program and First Platform," and in 1912 there appeared the co-operative volume entitled *The New Realism*. These publications were the fruit of many informal conferences, held in New York, Cambridge, Princeton, Woods Hole, Mass., and Dover, N. J. The secretarial task fell naturally to the talented and indefatigable Pitkin, whose only fault was his versatility. In the group discussions he, together with Spaulding, represented the emphasis on physical science and especially on biology; Marvin stood for the historical emphasis; Holt was peculiarly equipped to deal with the psychological and physiological aspects of epistemology; the present writer marshalled the arguments against idealism; Montague was our metaphysician.

The Preface to *The New Realism* contained an expression of the authors' hope that this volume would be "followed by other collections of studies." But though we continued to meet through 1914 the disagreements which had been subordinated and only imperfectly concealed, the divergence of interests, and the ambition of each to write his own book, soon divided us. Whatever may be thought of our doctrine, and the success of our experiment, the will and the effort to agree created a sense of intellectual brotherhood and enabled us for a time to speak a common language and proceed on common assumptions. This is an unusual achievement among philosophers, and it may perhaps be claimed that the new realists established a fashion, later adopted by the "critical realists," the idealists, and more recently by those who march under the flag of "naturalism."

## ❧ VIII ❧

# THE REALISTIC CRITIQUE OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

RALPH BARTON PERRY

For the purposes of this summary I shall divide contemporary philosophy, excepting realism, into naturalism, idealism, absolutism, and pragmatism.

1. *Naturalism*—Realism agrees in a measure with naturalism, in that both unqualifiedly accept the results of the natural sciences, and regard the mathematical sciences as the best model of exact thinking. But realism, in common with all other contemporary tendencies, rejects the naturalistic contention that natural science is the only branch of knowledge, or that the physical object is the only individual.

Naturalism appears in two forms, the speculative form, or materialism, and the critical form, or experimentalism. The former consists in the assertion of the universality of some physical substance, such as matter, force, or energy. Crude or naive materialism involves the error of pseudo-simplicity, due in this case to the bias of the organism for the bodily type of complex. In its philosophical development, materialism is dominated by the speculative dogma; and the attempt to construe matter, force, or energy as all-general and all-sufficient has led to that variety of equivocation and verbal suggestion that vitiates the fundamental concepts of all "reduction" philosophies. But the most flagrant defect in materialism is its epistemological dualism, involving the error of transcendent implication. Matter, force, or energy is construed as a substratum, and illegitimately inferred from phenomenal appearances.

<sup>1</sup> [Excerpt from "Realism as a Polemic and Program of Reform, II," *The Journal of Philosophy*, VII, No. 14 (July, 1910), 366-70.]

Critical naturalism, or experimentalism, is based upon an analysis of the physical object into elements of content, and a definition of the fundamental concepts of science as ratios or formulations involving these elements. This analysis realism accepts. But experimentalism, through its selection of local and quantitative verification as the test of truth, virtually asserts that the physical hypothesis is the only admissible hypothesis and the physical complex the only "fact." This assertion realism regards as wholly arbitrary and untenable, since it affords no account of other complexes, such, e.g., as geometry and consciousness. The experimentalist is influenced, no doubt, by the error of exclusive particularity. He construes his world at the outset as a series of localized sense-complexes, and disregards the possibility that the elements of these complexes may belong also to other complexes. The realist, on the other hand, having resolved the physical complex into general or logical elements, is enabled to discover several complexes in which these elements belong, with the result that the physical complex loses its uniqueness.

This same error of exclusive particularity involves the experimentalist in a dualism between perception, sensation, or fact, on the one hand, and conception, construct, or hypothesis, on the other. The second factor of knowledge is introduced to provide permanence, order, and generality. Since these are not found, they must be made. With the experimentalist they are man-made, pragmatic, and historical. This dualism, a method of confusion resulting in failure, is avoided by the realistic principle of multiple particularity. Permanence, order, and generality are accounted for by the fact that a concept may be in a perceptual complex and yet not of it.

2. *Idealism*—Realism agrees with idealism in assigning limits to natural science, although there is a difference amounting to one of principle in the grounds on which these limits are assigned. For idealism, science is deficient in validity, and thus never wholly true; for realism, science is deficient in scope, and thus not the whole truth.



Realism agrees with Kantian idealism, also, in asserting the categorized and articulated structure of the world. But realism dissents from the status which idealism assigns to the categories. For idealism they are "presuppositions," or acts of an "epistemological subject," arrived at through the error of transcendental implication; while for realism they are immanent, or parts of the objects of knowledge.

But the basal defect in idealism, as found in the realistic indictment, is subjectivism, or the assertion that consciousness is a universal condition of being. This assertion may in most cases be traced to the argument from the egocentric predicament, involving the fallacies of *petitio principii*, redundancy, or agreement. It obtains support also from the error of pseudosimplicity, which in this case encourages the supposition that ego, will, subject, or consciousness is known because it is familiar and stereotyped. The difference between idealism and realism respecting consciousness is peculiarly far-reaching. That which idealism regards as of primary ontological importance, realism regards as incidental. The neo-realistic reconstruction of idealism is more strictly comparable to the Copernican revolution than was the Kantian reconstruction of dogmatic realism. For it consists essentially in a decentralization. As in the Copernican system the earth loses its uniqueness and becomes a planet, so in neo-realism the ego loses its uniqueness and becomes an object among objects.

3. *Absolutism* <sup>2</sup>—Although absolutism is at present almost wholly identified with idealism, it has a separate history and an independent motive. Absolutism is essentially the philosophy of the speculative dogma. It seeks to define an all-general, all-sufficient principle in terms of complete knowledge, in terms of a maximum of truth inferred from the approximations of human knowledge. Realism denies that logic at present affords any conception of a maximum of truth. There is a general logical principle requiring that the number of funda-

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my [Perry's] article, "The Futility of Absolutism," *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1910).



mental propositions in a system shall be *as few as possible*. A true system can contain neither redundancy nor superfluity. But *how few* the fundamental propositions can be is not logically determinate. A universe that had as many postulates as terms, as many laws as events, would not be irrational or unintelligible. Humanly speaking it would be difficult to know such a universe, much more difficult, for example, than to know a monotonous or simple world. But there is no reason why the world should serve our convenience in this matter—any more than, as a matter of fact, it does.

Nor can any maximum of truth be defined on grounds of universal relationship. There is no good reason, I believe, for supposing that every entity is related to every other entity. The answer to this question must be postponed until the meaning of irrelevance, manyness, and difference has been rigorously examined by the methods of modern logic. But in any case, everything points to the relative triviality of the ubiquitous relations. A system, for example, of which the principle of combination was difference, and the class the totality of entities, would amount to no more than an aggregate of particular items of knowledge—the endless repetition of the assertion of difference. And such a system, though it might in a sense be all-comprehensive, would be more nearly a minimum of truth than a maximum of truth. Every proposition of real cognitive importance would in such a system be reduced to the status of a term having no predicate but difference.

It is the inadequacy of the most general propositions that makes absolutism so inveterately liable to formalism. Absolutism is the philosophical mountain that labors and brings forth a mouse. It combines the grand manner with the most trivial assertions. And such is the power of words and scholastic prestige, that it has begotten a reverence for empty and confused conceptions. "For the contentious and sophistical kind of philosophy," says Bacon, "ensnares the understanding; but this kind, being fanciful and tumid and half poetical, misleads it more by flattery. For there is in man an ambition of

the understanding, no less than of the will, especially in high and lofty spirits." <sup>3</sup>

4. *Pragmatism*—With pragmatism's attempt to dispel the absolutist's illusions of grandeur, realism is in hearty sympathy. Pragmatism has shown not only that absolutism in general is a meaningless and unverifiable hypothesis, but that a certain futility and inconsequential character pervades all its works. And the controversies aroused by pragmatism have demonstrated a fundamental difference among contemporary philosophers between those who feel themselves to be adventurers discovering new lands, and those who feel that they are walking about in a sort of patrimonial estate. The pragmatist phenomenology of truth was first ignored by absolutism, then denied, and finally claimed by right of eminent domain. During this incident, the realist's sympathies, owing doubtless to a self-preservative instinct, have been almost wholly with the pragmatist.

The charges which realism brings against pragmatism are directed not against the pragmatist conception of truth, strictly and narrowly construed, but against certain generalizations with which it is allied under the names of "humanism" and "anti-intellectualism."

Humanism is tainted by both subjectivism and nominalism. These have resulted, doubtless, from the more fundamental error of exclusive particularity, inherited from Hume. For humanism, "facts" belong wholly to the temporal flow of consciousness. The world obtains its structure through the historical ideating activity of man controlled by practical motives. But this constructive process, albeit it flows more slowly, is itself a flux like the passing states upon which it supervenes. Concepts pass down the stream of time more slowly than perceptions, but they are none the less essentially transient in character. The result is that the world is inherently self-contradictory; it may alienate its own fundamental nature, or annihilate itself retroactively. When the pragmatist theory of truth is thus

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, *Novum Organum*, ed. Ellis, Spedding, and Heath [*The New Organon*, "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 97 (New York, 1960), p. 62].

construed it strikes so deep as to undermine itself. Humanism, like idealism, puts mind in the hopeless predicament of standing in mid-air and trying to organize a world out of parts that have no inherent structural properties. Realism does not deny that true beliefs "work," or "fulfill a purpose," nor does it deny that this throws much light upon the history of civilization. But it asserts that *if* a belief works or fulfills a purpose, this must be because it adjusts an organism to an environment. Beliefs cannot by their practical success construct their environment, because they owe their success to their consistency with that environment.

Anti-intellectualism reflects the humanistic conception of thought as an instrument made for man's use. What man has made he may also unmake, or at least hold in subjection. Anti-intellectualism is also due on its negative side to a misconception of analysis. Analysis is not a process of decomposition or of fixation, but simply and solely the process of discovery *carried through*. It is as much concerned with wholes and connections and changes, as with simple terms. It does not represent any special cognitive interest, but the cognitive interest in general, when this is pure and self-consistent. When the anti-intellectualist urges us to forsake logic for life, he does so on grounds afforded not by life, but by logic. The positive assertions of anti-intellectualism arise, on the other hand, from the error of pseudo-simplicity, from mistaking the immediate and familiar life-experience for insight. In a certain sense we know anything that we may act on, and talk, think, or feel about automatically. In this sense we always know the old better than the new, and may even cherish a certain intimacy with our ignorance. But the moral is unmistakable. Familiarity and immediacy, because they soothe nescience, and tempt to a relaxation of scientific rigor, should be charted not as harbors of refuge but as shoals and reefs that menace the unwary voyager.

## IX

### THE PROBLEM OF TIME IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY <sup>1</sup>

FREDERICK J. E. WOODBRIDGE

As is well known, Kant connected space with the external sense and time with the internal sense. In so doing he was giving an obvious expression of a point of view which had become or was becoming habitual with many philosophers. From that point of view the mind was not regarded as the product of conditions which antedated its own existence. In that case time could not readily be connected with the internal sense. The mind was regarded rather as the knower of a world which either passed before it or could be taken up into itself through synthetic processes. For purposes of record, knowledge of the world in any specific instance could be thought of as an event, and the synthesis as actually performed by an individual mind could be thought of as an occurrence in the history of that mind. But judged metaphysically, the world known or synthetized was apparently implied as a datum logically given in its entirety before knowledge of it or synthesis of it could take place. A contrast between the temporal and the timeless was, thereby, defined. Any time span could mean only an amount of knowledge or of synthesis of a whole which, as a whole, is timeless.

Illustrations of this general point of view and its metaphysical results are many. Take, for instance, these statements from [James] Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*: "What is impossible is to construct absolute life in detail, to have the spe-

<sup>1</sup> Contributed to the discussion of the problem of time in its relation to present tendencies in philosophy, at the meeting of the American Philosophical Association, at New Haven, December 27-29, 1909. [Published in *The Journal of Philosophy*, VIII, No. 15 (July, 1910), 410-16.]

cific experience in which it consists," and yet "we can form the general idea of an absolute experience in which phenomenal distinctions are merged, a whole become immediate at a higher stage without losing any of its richness."<sup>2</sup> Or take this from Royce's *The World and the Individual*: "Now, in time, I seek, as if it were far beyond me, that goal of my Selfhood, that complete expression of my will, which in God, and for God, my whole life at once possesses."<sup>3</sup> Such statements appear to be intelligible only if we regard the mind's relation to reality as a sort of temporal approach to a timeless whole. As the expanding circles in a pool find their limits in the pool's extent, which, even as they expand, is itself fixed, so my experience or my mind, as it enlarges, finds its limits in an absolute experience or an absolute mind which, even now, while my enlargement proceeds, undergoes itself no expansion.

This conception of the mind's relation to reality has, in one form or another, motivated the greater part of modern philosophy, set its problems, and provided their solutions. In so doing its achievements and successes have been noteworthy. Their present philosophical value has, however, become a matter of serious doubt largely because it is becoming less habitual among philosophers to think of the mind's relation to reality after the manner of this suspected philosophy. Many, today, can think of the mind as reality's knower only with difficulty. They can recognize that men have so thought of it and that some still so think. But they can not think that way for themselves and at the same time cherish the belief that they are thinking adequately, sanely, and truthfully.

Let it be supposed that whatever those facts may be that we denominate "mind" or "experience," they constitute with the rest of facts no distinction between knower and known, they form no widening circle in a shoreless pool, they form no incomplete will whose completeness they none the less imply; or let it be supposed that what we call knowledge is not a time span's grasp of a reality which that span would envisage

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1897, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> [Published, 1900.] Vol. II, p. 150.

as a whole—then the philosophy of the absolute, its motive, its problems, and its solutions appear strange and artificial. To put the matter in positive terms—let knowledge be conceived to be a natural event like a storm or an earthquake, then the only problems of knowledge as knowledge which we can have are those that are involved in its definition and in seeking its natural antecedents and its natural consequences. There can be no more of a problem of the relation of knowledge to reality than there can be of the relation of a storm to reality; but there can be problems of what knowledge is and what precedes and follows it just as there can be problems of what an earthquake is and what precedes and follows it. Such problems will hardly carry us to the absorption of time in eternity or lead us to conceive, however inadequately, of a whole become immediate at a higher stage without losing any of its richness.

The oppositions which current studies in philosophy present, I take, therefore, to be radical and far-reaching. Controversies are no longer about methods and results, but about initial facts and points of departure. But points of departure can not be set down as merely arbitrary and unmotivated assumptions. Nor can they be justly regarded as convenient hypotheses whose claim to acceptance or recognition resides in the facility with which they can be used. They are rather to be regarded as simplifications of those more general conceptions which the significant achievements of knowledge lead us to entertain. What we call our view of the world is by no means simply the outcome of our philosophy: it is equally the picture of things which we naturally form as a result of the significant deliverances of knowledge in the concrete. It is necessary, therefore, to place points of view in that more general setting of which they are simplifications.

What then is the general setting which motives the assumptions of that philosophy which can regard experience as a time span within a timeless whole? The question may be answered by an examination of the philosophies themselves. The examination would, I think, reveal that the general setting is

that afforded by Newtonian physics and the astronomical achievements of such men as Copernicus and Laplace. Upon the background furnished by such a setting are reflected such diverse things as Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* and Addison's hymn, "The spacious firmament on high." Indeed that background constituted the general and controlling world view for several centuries. Men viewed the world as through a telescope, and philosophy took its departure from such a view simplified and reduced to terms of a mind and its object. As the eye at the telescope watched for some portion of the heavens to swing within its field of vision, so the mind watched for reality to appear within the limits of experience.

How little other sciences besides astronomy and physics contributed to shape the general view of the world in most men's minds is seen as late as 1872 in the reception accorded Emil du Bois-Reymond's sensational address at Leipzig, *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*. The copy I have of that address is of the seventh edition of 1891, and by that time it had been translated into English, French, Italian, and Servian! It is well known that that address elevated astronomy to the ideal of knowledge and that it pictured the limits of knowledge attainable by even a finite mind in terms of a mind to which, in the words of d'Alembert, "the whole world would be one single fact and one great truth."

Now such a general view of the world appears to be one where space conceptions dominate time conceptions. It is the world "as all there," so to speak, which has captured the imagination: a world as a totality which may admit certain internal changes in the relations of its elements to one another, but which, as a whole, is forever and permanently "there" "where." Such a view makes my present experience, my time span, a given *presence* of the whole, a given "hereness" of it. Such a view makes it natural for Kant to affirm, "that, in order to know that there is something permanent, which corresponds to the conception of substance, and thus to prove the objective reality of the conception, we must have the percep-



tion of that which is in *space*, in other words, the perception of matter; *for only space has in it anything permanent*, whereas time, and therefore all that exists in the inner sense, is in perpetual flux." <sup>4</sup>

In short, then, I take it, that the philosophy of the eternal and the absolute is a philosophy which flourishes where the picture men naturally form of the world is an astronomical or spatial picture. There is the world; here is the mind. There is the outward; here is the inward. There is the external meaning of ideas; here is their internal meaning. There is the object; here is the subject. There is all possible experience; here is my actual and incomplete experience. "There" and "here" is the basal contrast; and as "here" is "now," time is genuine, but it is never "there," for if it were, all would be "here" and "now."

The picture of the world which the notable achievements of knowledge lead us to form today is the picture of a world in the making, an incomplete and unfinished world, a world which has had a past and will have a future. It is almost needless to say that this picture is formed under the controlling influence of biological and evolutionary conceptions. It is the picture of the world as a thing with a history. And this history discloses not the possible successive arrangements or relations of the elements of one vast whole which is always there, but, if we may speak of a whole at all, it discloses that whole as itself changing and growing, as a thing which could never be grasped by any mind as one single fact and one great truth. The possibility of permanence in the world is not space, as with Kant, but time, for we can say of things that the place which knew them knows them no more. Only that is permanent which *lasts*, but space held much which it holds no

<sup>4</sup> Watson's "Selections," p. 127. [*The Philosophy of Kant as Contained in Extracts from His Own Writings*, selected and translated by John Watson (London and New York: Macmillan, 1901; 2nd edn., 1908). This quotation is from Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), "Transcendental Analytic," Bk. II, chap. 2, sec. 4.]



longer. Thus time tends to become as dominant and controlling a factor in our thinking as space was formerly. It is Darwin's picture which tends to replace that of Newton.

A warning should doubtless be sounded lest philosophers, with their imaginations fired by the more recent vision, should forget that there is the spacious firmament on high, lest they should exalt the world's ceaseless flux, but neglect its stable factors. Yet, even so, it needs little wit to see that the newer vision means a radical transformation of philosophy. Most radical, I think, is the transformation likely to be wrought in our conception of thought and its relation to the rest of things. It seems to me very difficult for one to believe that consciousness is an event in the world's history and still hope to understand that event, still hope to throw light on the relation of thought to the rest of things, if he follows the traditional lines of modern epistemology and psychology. How can one longer deal with the old antitheses between the ego and the non-ego, subject and object, the mind and the world, thought and reality, ideas and things, the internal and the external, if one is genuinely convinced that sense organs, a nervous system, and exciting stimuli must first be *produced* before thinking can occur? I am well aware of the obvious rejoinder at this point, namely, that we can know nothing about sense organs and the rest except as they are given in our experience. But the rejoinder most successfully misses the point. For what is to be our attitude if the insistent lesson of our experience of things is that experience itself is a happening? How can I take the necessity I am under of experiencing things in order to have knowledge of them as the fundamental fact in my philosophy, if the knowledge I thus acquire reveals my experience of things as an event in their history? There are many who can not. Those who can not believe that, whatever problems consciousness, knowledge, and experience present, they must be handled from a point of view radically different from that which has quite generally prevailed since the time of Locke. The eye at the telescope serves them no longer as a figure.

The historical point of view is significant not only as a new

point of departure, but also because it tends to discredit many of those problems of philosophy that have often been regarded as persistent. From among them I select for illustration the problem, How can experience give us knowledge of reality? Now, if experience is an event which happens to nature in the course of her history, if it is an event in her life, so to speak, how can we define a distinction between reality and experience which would give us an important and vital philosophical problem? In other words, does the event we call experience point to anything besides its antecedents and its consequences? Is there anything in the situation which should lead us to suppose that besides a reference to its antecedents and its consequences, experience has also another reference, to something which is neither an antecedent nor a consequence, but something which we may regard as the reality which experience represents or which somehow appears in experience? I venture still another form of the same question. If the pointings of experience are temporal, to the past and to the future, but not spatial, to an outside or an other, or to something at right angles with itself, what philosophical problem of reality as opposed to experience can we scare into being? Surely such questions make such a problem look queer and artificial. Again, if we can discover no genuine antithesis between reality and experience, there remains no compulsion to conclude that what precedes and follows experience is itself also experience or at best a picture painted only in the colors of experience. For experience discloses the history and connections of its own facts. To ask, therefore, whether these facts actually had this history, or do have these connections, is simply to ask in general form such questions as these: Did the cave bear live before man? or, Does the Atlantic Ocean lie between Europe and America? In brief, experience is a natural event; it is not a representation of nature.

If experience provokes no problem of reality as opposed to itself, it would appear that metaphysics discovers its own problems not in epistemology, but in those bodies of specific knowledge which result from our study of the nature and be-

havior of definite things. Its procedure becomes experimental, inductive, and objective. As I have elsewhere discussed the general aspects of this view, I content myself here with a single illustration.<sup>5</sup> A metaphysician may ask, Is chance real? But what does he mean by "real"? That little word has made his question interesting, but it has not made it a metaphysical question. If it had, he must first discover what it is to be real. But how can he make that discovery if every fact, every event, every distinction, every connection, every relation—everything, in short—which he wishes to investigate brutally forces upon him the problem of its own reality? If, however, the word "real" provokes no metaphysical contrast, the metaphysician will ask, What is chance? When is it found? How does it operate? But he must first have chance to investigate before he can investigate it. And if he has chance as a problem, he will never have a metaphysical problem of its reality. For, I repeat, the moment we are convinced that experience creates no philosophical distinction between itself and reality, the adjective "real" takes a modest position among all other adjectives; it ceases to be the metaphysical adjective par excellence.

I have, in the foregoing, indicated what appears to me to be a fundamental contrast in current philosophical controversies, and attempted to put that contrast in its general setting and to suggest some of its possibilities. If I have made myself clear, I think it must be apparent that time itself, in the light of what has been said, does not present a unique problem. It may present difficult and intricate problems, but it does not present a problem which can be regarded philosophically as different in kind from any other problem whatsoever. It may, however, be made to present specious problems like the problem of the specious present, but these tend to disappear, I am convinced, when time is taken as a given subject of inquiry and not as a mystery to be explained. If experience is a natural event with antecedents and consequences, it is itself a time affair, a thing with a past and a future. If,

<sup>5</sup> [F. J. E. Woodbridge, *Metaphysics*, "Lectures on Science, Philosophy, and Art" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), p. 26.]

further, consciousness and knowledge are bound up with experience, I find no more difficulty in admitting consciousness and knowledge of time than I have in admitting consciousness and knowledge of anything else. Things are all in the same boat when it comes to that. But I do find a problem in so defining consciousness that provision may be made for the fact that things sail into it and out again without any break in the continuity of their being. To affirm that the definition must be such as to provide also for the occurrence of consciousness itself as a temporal event, may seem to some like affirming a paradox, but it appears to me to be an affirmation based upon the conviction that the bodies of knowledge we build up from our study of things are knowledge of the kind of world in which we live. These bodies of knowledge may be enlarged, or improved, or greatly changed, but it appears to me to be unsound to suppose that they can be enlarged or improved or changed by thinking that they necessarily involve a metaphysical distinction between time and eternity or between appearance and reality. Furthermore, a metaphysics which can be regarded as true no matter what truths the special sciences contain, appears to me to be interesting, but inadequate.



## AMERICAN EXISTENTIAL AND SUBSISTENTIAL REALISM<sup>1</sup>

WILLIAM PEPPERELL MONTAGUE

Although the impressions of American realism that are to be sketched in this paper are almost exclusively concerned with the organized groups calling themselves "New Realists" and "Critical Realists," it is appropriate to mention at least the names of six American philosophers who, though they were not officially members of either group, have during the past thirty years in various ways and in varying degree expounded a realistic philosophy. These "unofficial" realists are: first and most important of the series, Woodbridge of Columbia (who was invited but refused to join the New Realists), McGilvary of Wisconsin, Boodin of the University of California at Los Angeles, Cohen of the College of the City of New York, Loewenberg of the University of California, and Macintosh of Yale.

We had all been realists prior to our forming the group, and each of us had written papers in which realism was implicitly or explicitly defended. I think that Perry and I wrote the first two of the explicitly realistic articles, and these were each inspired by the bitter attack on the realistic standpoint contained in the first volume of his *Gifford Lectures* by our teacher, Professor Royce. My article in *The Philosophical Review* for March, 1901, was entitled "Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism"; and Perry's article entitled "Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism and Pluralism" was printed in *The Monist* for October of the same year. Though the mem-

<sup>1</sup> [Excerpts from "The Story of American Realism," first published in *Philosophy*, XII, No. 46 (April, 1937), 1-22.]

bers of our new group differed widely in their metaphysical views, there were certain methodological and epistemological postulates which we shared in common. I may summarize them as follows:

1. Philosophers should follow the example of scientists and co-operate rather than work alone. The co-operation which we were to practice consisted in each man showing his essay to the others, taking account of their suggestions, and securing, not unanimous agreement with every proposition, but general assent to the essay as a whole.

I am not sure that this precept was put into practice to any very significant extent. We read one another's papers and listened conscientiously to one another's criticisms, and we did for the most part make the revisions or at least the omissions that were requested, but I am afraid that especially on matters about which we felt strongly there tended to develop among us a tacit and, I hope, an unconscious understanding which if made explicit could have been expressed as, "I'll pass your stuff if you'll pass mine."

2. Philosophers should follow the example of scientists in isolating their problems and tackling them one by one. We were to follow this precept by isolating the epistemological problem and studying the cognitive relation obtaining between any knower or apprehender and any object that he knows or apprehends without prejudging or even raising the question as to the ultimate nature of the apprehending subjects or of the apprehended objects.

I think that we stuck to this precept fairly consistently. If a certain amount of ontology and cosmology was included in each of the essays in our book, it was by way of supplementation and clarification of the central issue, which was the question of whether the cognitive relation was or was not a necessary condition for the reality of the objects cognized. The point was of especial importance to me because I had a metaphysics less naturalistic and more dualistic than that of the others—with the possible exception of Pitkin—and I wanted



to be quite sure that our agreement on the realistic theory that *knowledge as such makes no difference to the objects known* was not going to commit us to any theory as to the nature of those objects or of man's place among them.

3. Some, at least, of the *particulars* of which we are conscious exist when we are not conscious of them.

This was the ordinary particularistic or *existential* realism of common use.

4. Some, at least, of the *essences or universals* of which we are conscious subsist when we are not conscious of them.

This was Platonic or *subsistential* realism.

5. Some, at least, of the particulars as well as the universals that are real are apprehended directly rather than indirectly through copies or mental images.

This was the *presentative realism* of Reid, as contrasted with the representative realism or epistemological dualism of Descartes and Locke.

It will be seen from the last three of our five postulates that we planned to revive and defend ordinary realism by adding to it Platonism and by subtracting from it the dualistic or copy theory of knowledge. . . .

The fallacies of idealism as they appeared to us can be briefly stated, and such a statement may help to clarify our own position.

The first and cardinal fallacy of idealists was their ascription of self-evidence to the proposition that the relation of the knower to the object known is an "internal relation," that is, a relation such that the terms related are dependent upon the existence of the relation.

This first dogma, asserting the axiomaticity of idealism, has been held by idealists from Berkeley to Bradley. The realist, of course, denies that the relation of the knower to the object known is self-evidently revealed as "internal." He makes no counterclaim for the self-evidence of "externality" of the cognitive relation, but he does hold that the latter can be proved inductively.

Now, when the idealist has once committed himself to the postulate that no object can exist apart from consciousness or experience, he finds himself in a predicament. The universe is obviously too large and long-enduring for him to regard it as dependent upon the finite experience of himself and his neighbors; hence, there must be postulated an infinite and absolute experience in which it is contained and on which it does depend. The second postulate of Absolutism is thus made necessary to repair the havoc wrought by the first postulate of Subjectivism. If, however, we refuse as realists to take the first step, we are under no compulsion to take the second. If events can exist in their own right without the need of depending on consciousness, the hypothesis of an absolute consciousness is no longer demanded by the situation. The Absolute may, of course, be inferable on other grounds, but not on the grounds of epistemology.

From the standpoint of most realistic observers, the essential doctrine of pragmatism consists of two postulates, which we may term, respectively, the *methodological* postulate of Practicalism (which states a theory as to the criterion of truth), and the *epistemological* postulate of Relativism (which states a theory as to the *meaning* of truth). The methodological postulate is very ambiguous and appears to be variously interpreted even by the pragmatists themselves. When one says that a proposition can be believed to be true if it works well in practice or if it leads to successful consequences, one may mean either (1) that accepting the proposition brings happiness or (2) that it brings a sensory experience of which the proposition in question was an anticipation. A religious creed, for example, may be held to be true on the ground that it enables its adherents to function efficiently and to meet the crises of life with serenity and courage. In this sense it works well and leads to successful results in practice. But I think that most realists would regard the correlation between the truth of a proposition and its "working well" in this sense as very imperfect and unreliable. There are many false beliefs that have worked well over long periods of time for many people,



and again, there are many true propositions that can bring despair and even paralysis of action to some of the persons who believe them. If, on the other hand, we take "working well" or "successful consequence in practice" to mean *sensory fulfillment of anticipation*, then, indeed, we have a reliable criterion of truth—which is, however, nothing but old-fashioned empiricism under a new name.

But it was not the methodological postulate of pragmatism (even when interpreted "humanistically" rather than empirically) to which realists as such were mainly opposed, but rather the epistemological postulate which grew out of it. To regard the successful experiences that ensue from a belief as a criterion of its truth is one thing—and a thing that is sometimes bad and sometimes good—but to assume that *truth itself consists in the process by which it is verified* is a different thing and always bad. It makes truth a psychological affair and, as such, an affair of individual experience. I may experience successful consequences from believing that the proposition "A is B" is true; you may experience consequences that are equally successful, and successful in the same sense, from believing that it is false. Shall we, then, say that the same proposition is at once both true and false? True for me and false for you? This relativistic epistemology of the pragmatists was rejected by the realists. The truth (or falsity) of a proposition antedates the process by which it is verified (or refuted). The proposition, "Mars is inhabited by intelligent beings," is either true or false; but it may be a long time before we discover which. When and if we do discover whether the proposition is true, it will occur to nobody except a philosophic pragmatist in the privacy of his study to imagine that the proposition waited until that moment to *become* true or to *become* false. The facts about Mars, like other facts in the world, will be regarded as having been what they were prior to the events of their discovery or verification.

To this realistic attitude the pragmatists replied by saying that we were making a fetish of "Truth in the abstract" or "Truth with a capital T" which could never be experienced

and which consequently had no use or meaning. And they would add the comment that while it was all very well for us to say that truth was the relation of "agreement between judgments and realities," we ought at the same time to admit that such agreement could be found only in individual experiences, to which, therefore, it was relative and on which it was dependent.

It seems to me that we have here a recurrence of the "ego-centric predicament," but in an interestingly altered form. In the original form of the "predicament" we were challenged by the idealists to point to a case of *reality* apart from experience. In the new form of the "predicament" we are challenged by the pragmatists to point to a case of truth (that is, the agreement relation of judgments with reality) apart from experience. We answered the idealist by pointing out that, though quite obviously facts could never be observed in the absence of experiencing them, yet when they were observed in the presence of experience they gave every sign of being independent of that experience with which they were copresent. And as it was with *facts*, so also is it with *truth*, which is the special relation of agreement or correspondence obtaining between facts and the judgments about them. The agreements can never be discovered when absent from the experience that verifies them; but, when discovered in that experience, they give every sign of not depending upon it. When Columbus verifies his hypothesis that there is land to the westward of Europe; when Newton verifies his gravitational hypothesis; when Pythagoras verifies his geometrical hypothesis—in each and every case the truth that is verified reveals a structure that could not have depended upon or have had to "wait for" the verifying experience in order to be what it is. The whole nature and behavior of things testifies to the realists' conclusion that the function of experience in general and of verification in particular is not to create in themselves the things and the agreements that are experienced and verified, but rather to reveal or discover them to us. It is we, the perceiving subjects, and not they, the perceived objects, that profit and are changed

by that strangest of all relations between an individual and his environment, the relation which we variously denominate "awareness of," "consciousness of," or "experiencing."

There was a final charge that was sometimes brought by the pragmatists which made us peculiarly and justifiably indignant. This was the charge that, because we held that facts and truths do not depend upon being experienced, we should also hold that experience is *otiose* and makes no difference to the world in which it occurs. In rejecting this imputation of epiphenomenalism (at least as a necessary consequence of his epistemological theory), the realist may point out that consciousness, though not affecting objects in the act of revealing them, can and does change them through the actions of the being to whom they are revealed. Seeing an object enables the seer to adapt himself to it and to its laws, or even to adapt it to himself and to his needs. The light of a lantern does not directly affect the obstacles in the path of the traveler, but it does affect them indirectly by enabling the traveler to remove them. Thus, and thus only, are objects affected by our experience of them.

From this section and the one preceding, it will be seen that the epistemological controversy was triangular. Idealism, Pragmatism, Realism—each one against the other two. From our realistic viewpoint, the idealists were right in holding to the ordinary conception of truth as something absolute and not relative to finite minds, but wrong in their insistence that facts exist ultimately only as items of a single, all-embracing experience; while, on the other hand, the pragmatists were right in holding on to a pluralistic world of facts, but wrong in supposing that truths about those facts were relative to and dependent upon the changing and conflicting experiences of verification. In matters of ethics, however, the pragmatists were usually on the side of the angels. And as we were all utilitarians, we approved of their making value relative to the needs and satisfactions of individuals while regretting that they should fail to see the contrast in this respect between value and truth. When the same proposition seems true to one

man and false to another, one of the men must be *wrong*; but when one and the same thing is felt as good to one man and as an evil to another, *both* of the men can be *right*. One man's meat can be another man's poison.

The six members of the organized group of New Realists had come to the movement for differing reasons and with differing interests. And our views on metaphysics and even on some aspects of epistemology were by no means always in agreement. Which of these differences were the most important and how they should be formulated would themselves, I am afraid, be questions about which we should differ. As I am the one who is at present telling the story, I must of necessity formulate the points at issue between us in my own way and select as the most important those that seem most important to me. If in this matter or elsewhere in the article, I inadvertently misrepresent the positions of friends (or opponents), I here and now apologize.

From my standpoint, the differences that were most important both in themselves and in their influence on the later development of the neo-realistic movement centered first on the question as to the "*Behavioristic*" nature of consciousness and second on the question as to the "*relativistic*" but *existential status of the objects of illusion and error*. On these two questions Perry and Holt held views which I believed to be false. As to the positions of Pitkin, Marvin, and Spaulding on these points, I was never quite clear.

As to the nature of consciousness: Perry and Holt believed that an individual's awareness of an object consisted in a "specific response" of that individual's organism to the object. Now, an organism's response ("specific" or otherwise) to an object must be a *motion*, simple or complex, of some or all of the material particles composing the organism. Any motion must be up or down, east or west, north or south, or in some intermediate spatial direction. How can such a motion constitute what we experience as the "consciousness of " an object? (1) It does not resemble it in any way, unless in the small proportion of cases in which the object is itself a motion of

material particles. (2) It cannot be directed toward it except in those cases in which the object of our consciousness is a spatial event contemporary with the organism's motion. (3) It affords no clue to our ability to apprehend secondary qualities, abstract ideas, other minds, or events of the past and the future. (4) Worst of all, the organism's specific response or directed motion fails to provide for the *duration* or "specious present" that characterizes every experience and significantly differentiates it from all other events and relations. Each phase or momentary cross-section of a *motion* must be over and gone before a later one can come. But with *consciousness*, it is just the reverse: each phase or momentary cross-section is not over and gone when the successor appears, but endures along with it.

These objections, which applied with sufficient strength to the older forms of materialism, are even stronger against this new materialism or Behaviorism, which would identify the awareness of an object outside the body with a "specific response," that is, a hypothetical motion of the body or its parts toward that object. The peculiar self-transcending thing called awareness puts an individual in relation to objects that are either in other places and times or not in space and time at all. If it is to be identified with something in the organism, that something should be anything rather than motion.

The second of my differences with my colleagues concerned the existential status of the objects of perceptual illusions and of other erroneous experiences. Unless I have grossly misunderstood them in this matter, they held the theory of "Relativistic Objectivism" or (as rechristened by Lovejoy) "Objective Relativism." This is the view that every object that appears to be in space is in space, and because different and mutually incompatible objects appear (though not to the same observer at the same time) to occupy the same space, it must follow that an object at each instant has no single position and shape by its own right, but many positions and shapes, each one of which is relative to some observer.

To illustrate: The rails over which your train has traveled, when seen from the rear platform, appear convergent, and



when seen from directly above appear parallel. The convergent rails are apparently just as objectively existent in space as the rails that are parallel. But in each case the objective existence is not absolute but relative to an observer. Or, again, that which normally appears as two flat disks will, when viewed through a stereopticon, appear as a single solid sphere, and the latter is to the objective relativist as truly an occupant of space as is the former. Or, finally, what to a healthy man appears as a bedpost may to a man suffering from delirium appear as a serpent. Each of these objects will (it is claimed) exist objectively in space—the bedpost relative to the healthy brain, and the serpent relative to the fevered brain. In short, the things that exist objectively in space are to include along with the things ordinarily supposed to exist there the totality of actual and possible objects of perspective aberration and illusion, and even of dreams and hallucinations.

The objective relativist is, of course, careful to point out that for an objective existent to be relative to and in that sense dependent upon an actual (or possible) observer or organism does not at all mean a relativity to or a dependence upon *consciousness*. And my neo-realist colleagues would feel outraged if they were accused of having surrendered in their theory of error to that very subjectivism against which we were all pledged to revolt. And yet, despite the insistence that whatever appears can be relative to an observational context without thereby forfeiting its ontological status as a "physical" existent, it still seems to me that these relativistic objects do bear a suspicious resemblance to the sense impressions of Hume, Mill, and Avenarius; and that the New Realism in adopting them has evolved (or degenerated) into the old phenomenalism.

There are three objections to this theory of illusory perception which I feel justified in stating as a part of my story of American realism, not only because I think that they constitute a decisive refutation of objective relativism itself, but because the failure of New Realism to meet them was the cause and the justification for the coming of Critical Realism.

The first difficulty with objective relativism is its neglect of the profound *asymmetry* of the relation between the veridical and the illusory objects of perception. The asymmetry referred to consists in the fact that *the illusory perceptions can be explained by the veridical, whereas the veridical cannot be explained by the illusory*. The rails over which my train has traveled appear convergent from some viewpoints and parallel from others. If we assume that the rails are parallel, we can easily explain why and how and when an *appearance* of their being convergent will arise. But if we reverse this procedure and assume that they are in fact convergent, we cannot explain why the appearance of their parallelism should occur under the circumstances in which it does occur. Or, again, if the two flat disks in front of the stereoscope are in reality what they appear to be in what would usually be called veridical perception, we can then explain in terms of physical and physiological optics why these two disks when viewed stereoscopically should cause the appearance of a single sphere. But if we reverse the business and posit the solid sphere to be the physical fact, we cannot explain why or how it should ever give rise to the appearance of two flat disks.

Between the hallucinations of dreams and the experiences of waking life the same asymmetry is found. Dream worlds can be explained in terms of the waking world, but not the reverse. The dream hallucinations, like the perceptual illusions, can be as vivid and internally consistent as their veridical counterparts. Taken in themselves and by themselves, one appearance is as good as another. But when we interrelate them by that type of procedure which we call "explanation," their fatal differences in ontological status are easily discerned.

The second of the difficulties in the theory of objective relativism is a sort of generalization of the first. Real objects have two ways of producing effects; unreal or illusory objects have but one. An existent thing, be it material or mental, produces (1) direct effects, that is, effects in its own right, upon all other things; and it produces (2) indirect effects through the agency of whoever believes or even apprehends it.

The thing produces this second group of effects not by right as existing, but *by grace* as being an object of some experience. Now, while veridical or existent things produce both classes of effects, illusory or nonexistent objects produce only those indirect effects that come through the agency of the minds whose objects they are. Consider flounders and mermaids. Flounders affect the hooks that catch them and the stomachs that digest them, and in addition as objects of contemplation they inspire fishermen and perhaps poets to do things that they would not do unless they figured in the experience of those agents. On the other hand, the mermaids, while they, too, as objects of contemplation have inspired poets and perhaps fishermen to undertake various actions, they have never in their own right affected a hook or a stomach or anything else. Or, again, compare and contrast the real God that you believe in with the unreal god believed in by your theological opponents. You, of course, know that, while the effects of the latter are restricted to the fancies and resultant actions of the unfortunates who are deluded, the effects of your God are produced not only through the minds of His followers but upon the world as a whole.

This difference holds all along the line. Unreal objects, whether they be objects of hallucination and sensory illusion, such as stereoscopic spheres and converging railway tracks, or whether they be objects of intellectual delusion and mistaken belief, such as mermaids and false gods, are characterized by their utter inability to produce any effects except on and through the victimized minds in whose experience they appear.

It is because of his failure to realize this obvious but important truth that the objective relativist is guilty of a preposterously impudent *understatement* when he says that the objects of so-called veridical perceptions are more "convenient" than the objects of so-called illusory perception. The former do not just happen to be more convenient. There is a reason; and the reason is that the veridical objects form a select aristocracy of appearances which owe their rank (1) to their abil-



ity to explain all the rest, and (2) to the ability to constitute a self-consistent and self-contained system of causally related elements. This is just another way of saying that real objects are such objects and only such objects as can produce effects directly upon one another as well as indirectly by grace of the minds that perceive them.

The last of the three weaknesses in the theory of objective relativism is based upon its unmanageable complexity. It may be possible to find room in a single spatial system for the totality of such perspective aberrations as railway tracks of various degrees of convergence and of pennies of various degrees of ellipticity; but if we add to these comparatively simple erroneous perceptions not only the stereoscopic spheres but the objects of every dream and every delirium, then not even the genius of a Russell or a Whitehead could devise a space or a space-time that would be adequate to serve as a bed, no matter how procrustean, in which such so-called and miscalled "physical existents" could all be placed and duly ordered. Yet each and all of these objects would be *physical* if by "physical" one is to mean whatever appears as spatial. Indeed, "Pan-physicalism" should be the awkward but accurately descriptive term to designate this phase of objective relativism in which the phobia against a "bifurcation" or division of spatial phenomena into subjective and objective has been indulged to such an extent as to confer the same ontological status upon everything that appears to have shape, size, and position. But if, in order at any price to avoid "bifurcation," we must practice this metaphysical egalitarianism, I for one would prefer the idealistic form of it. It is less difficult, even if not less gratuitous, to think of the totality of actual and possible appearances as being somehow synthesized and harmonized in one absolute consciousness than in any milieu of a spatial or physical kind.

Of course, the objective relativism which I have been attacking was not the only way out. Without lapsing into either dualism or idealism, it would have been quite possible for the New Realists to have dealt with the problem of error by the

simple expedient of *denying any locus of any kind to the non-existent things that figure in all erroneous experience*, as objects either of perceptual illusion or of conceptual delusion. For a thing not to exist is for it to exist nowhere. Any possible or subsistent object *can* appear in consciousness, and a few of them *do* appear there, but only a minority of such objects enjoy membership in the great society of interacting existents as well as in the little societies of objects for conscious minds. Just as one and the same point can be a member of two or more intersecting curves, so, as William James pointed out (for the first time, I believe, in a college class which I attended in 1898), can one and the same object be a member of the independent order of existence and at the same time and with no disruption of identity be also an object of experience. By accepting such a view of the matter, coupled with a refusal to accord any physical locus to the unreal objects of illusion and delusion, we can escape bifurcation or epistemological dualism without falling into either idealism or pan-physicalism.

I wish I could think of the theory just stated, which was my own solution of the epistemological problem, as the "Right Wing of New Realism"; but alas, it takes more than one feather to make a wing, and as I was quite unable to stem the drift to the Left—that is, to Behaviorism and Objective Relativism—I fear it is historically correct to regard those movements as constituting the essence of American New Realism, at least in its later stage of development.

In or about the year 1920 a second group of American philosophers decided to write a co-operative book in the interest of a realistic epistemology. The group was composed of George Santayana, formerly at Harvard, C. A. Strong, formerly at Columbia, A. K. Rogers, formerly at Yale, A. O. Lovejoy at Johns Hopkins, R. W. Sellars at Michigan, J. B. Pratt at Williams, and Durant Drake at Vassar. They called themselves "Critical Realists" and entitled their book *Essays in Critical Realism*. They regarded our New Realism, with its attempt to interpret existent objects as directly presented to the mind (rather than as indirectly represented through images or

copies), as a form of Naive Realism (which indeed it was) and they chose the word "critical" as suitably antithetic to the *naiveness* of which we, their predecessors, had been guilty.

As in the earlier group of six, so also in this late group of seven, the members combined agreement in epistemology with disagreement in metaphysics. Rogers was a skeptic, though with naturalistic tendencies. He had, however, been trained in idealism, and his realism was mellowed by a rich historical scholarship and an unusual tolerance of mind. Strong, Drake, and Sellars were all definitely naturalistic, though Strong supplemented his naturalism with a kind of pan-psychism in which Drake followed him, while Sellars supplemented his with an enthusiasm for Emergent Evolution. Lovejoy and Pratt were dualists in psychophysics as well as in epistemology, and constituted the Right Wing of the movement. Lovejoy put especial emphasis on the significance of *time* as affecting all aspects of nature and mind and christened his philosophy "Temporalism." His pet aversions were Behaviorism and Objective Relativism, and against them he waged unremitting dialectical war, always urbane but devastatingly effective. Even further to the Right than Lovejoy and nearer than any of the others to a metaphysical spiritualism was Pratt, who combined a first-hand knowledge of the mystical idealisms of India with a strong sympathy for Christian theism. As for Santayana, his rich and many-sided philosophy is known to everybody. At least as naturalistic as Sellars, Strong, and Drake, he combined with his naturalism and materialistic epiphenomenalism a Platonic realism more completely and consistently worked out than in any previous philosophy. This blend of a materialistic conception of the realm of *existence* with a Platonic conception of the realm of *essence* from which all things derive their meanings and their values, but not their destiny, has always seemed to me (second only to Bergson's) the most challenging and instructive of modern visions. Even to one who, like the writer, is unable to share Santayana's pessimistic belief in the *causal impotence* of Platonic forms, it

is a great thing to have that vast, encompassing realm of essence or subsistence depicted in its purity and completeness and freed from irrelevant entanglements with the subjectivistic theories of knowledge and the teleological theories of nature which have traditionally obscured both its meaning and its beauty.

When one turns from the original and richly varying metaphysical affiliations of the Critical Realists to the bare nucleus of epistemological doctrine on which they were all agreed and which constitutes the definition of Critical Realism itself, I am myself unable to see anything that is either rich or original. The theory may be true, but it certainly is not new. It is, indeed, nothing but a restatement of the Epistemological Dualism which is explicit in Locke and Descartes and implicit in Hobbes, Spinoza, and the other modern philosophers prior to Berkeley.

This dualistic epistemology is very simple and clear. Its tenets are the following:

1. The world is composed of at least two sets of entities: (a) material things; and (b) mental states or ideas.

2. The ideas alone are given or presented as objects in consciousness, and in that sense are *immediately* known, while the material things are only *mediately* known, being inferred as the direct or indirect causes of the ideas.

3. The inferred material objects are always numerically or existentially non-identical with the immediately presented objects or ideas from which they are inferred; and they are furthermore, at least partially different in kind or nature from the latter.

From this point on, epistemological dualists differ from one another. Some of them, for example, Descartes and Locke, hold that the ideas inhere in a mental substance or spirit; others, for example, Hobbes and Spinoza, hold that the ideas do not inhere in a non-material substance, but that they are phantasms or inner aspects of the body or of the substance of

which the body is the outer aspect. But it is important to realize that the question of whether the mind is numerically identical or numerically non-identical with the brain is a psychophysical or metaphysical question that has no direct bearing upon the epistemological question of the relation of ideas to the material objects that are inferred as their causes. In other words, the alleged epistemological duality of internal ideas and external objects is not aggravated by supplementing it with the psychophysical dualism of Descartes, nor is it mitigated by supplementing it with the psychophysical monism of Hobbes or of Spinoza.

On the epistemological dualism which has just been summarily expounded, there are two preliminary comments which can be made without prejudgment of the question of its ultimate validity or invalidity. First, the theory seems to account simply and clearly for the illusions and aberrations of sensory experience, and for what is generally assumed as to the physical and psychological processes that condition our awareness of events distant from us in space and time. Second, the theory seems to be as weak in accounting for truth as it is strong in accounting for error. If our experience affords direct access only to the internal realm of one's own mental states, by what magic can we jump out of our skins and infer or construct that external realm of material objects in which we undoubtedly do believe? If we emphasize the inaccessibility of an external world, we are led to skepticism, for we must doubt the extent to which that world which we can never experience can be proved to resemble the world that we can experience. In fact, we must be doubtful not only as to the nature of the external world, but even as to whether it can be shown to exist at all. On the other hand, if instead of concentrating on the numerical otherness of the external world, the epistemological dualist attends to the assumed qualitative likeness of that world to the world of his experience, then he is led not to skepticism but to idealism; for the world that he believes in and that he has alleged to be external now turns out to be an extension and elaboration of his world of ideas.

These two comments that I have just made briefly have been made at length and in detail by the whole history of philosophy subsequent to Locke.

Now what, if anything, have the Critical Realists done to mitigate the two sad dialectical sequels to epistemological dualism with which our philosophic tradition has made us familiar?

So far as I can see, their contributions to epistemology are mainly confined to a refutation of the *monistic objectivism* of the New Realists and to a restatement in slightly different form of the dualistic or representative theory of perception. In the matter of refutation, the most effective work, in my opinion, was done (1) by Drake in his arguments against any form of simple or absolute objectivism; and (2) by Lovejoy in his careful and extensive analysis of the fallacies of the relativistic objectivism of Whitehead, Russell, and the "Logical Positivists."

In the matter of restating the theory of dualistic realism, Santayana is the only member of the group whose thought makes any claim to an advance beyond the position of Locke and Descartes. Yet even in the case of Santayana, whose work in metaphysics is of such enduring value, I can find nothing of real novelty for the epistemological problem. To say that the object of awareness is always an "essence" and that one and the same essence can be exemplified both in subjective experience and in objective nature, does at first sight appear to bridge the traditional gulf between the internal realm of mental states and the external realm of material things. But this appearance of novelty in thought is, I fear, due entirely to a novelty in language—the language of Platonism being employed to describe a situation that is ordinarily described in the language of Nominalism.

To illustrate the way in which the two languages can be used with equal propriety to describe one and the same situation, let us take the classic example of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Here are two numerically or existentially separate individuals who are, however, in quality, kind, or essence,

exactly the same. If we are in a nominalistic mood and desire to emphasize their existential duality rather than their qualitative sameness, we shall characterize them as "two different individuals, Dum and Dee, who happen to be perfectly similar in respect to their Tweedleness." If, on the other hand, we are in a Platonic mood and desire to emphasize their qualitative sameness at the expense of their existential duality, we can characterize them as "a case in which one identical essence of *Tweedleness* happens to be exemplified or actualized twice, once in *Dum* and once in *Dee*." But it is easy to see that the two characterizations are merely different verbal formulae equally applicable to one and the same situation. For suppose that only one of the twins were given in experience; then the other could not be inferred with any more validity by calling him "a second individual exactly similar to the one that is experienced." Now, if for Tweedledum and Tweedledee we substitute, respectively, *ideas that are internal and given as mental states* and *physical objects that are external and inferred as being similar to the ideas in all or some of their properties*, we don't bridge the gap between the given and the inferred by replacing the Lockian *similarity of mental and physical things* with the Santayanian *mental and physical exemplifications of the same essence*.

I should regard the analysis just given as too obvious to call for statement, were it not for the fact that I believe that the Critical Realists labor under the delusion that, quite apart from Santayana's Platonic ontology, the description of the exclusively internal objects of consciousness as "essences" works in a mysterious way to bridge the epistemological gap between mental states and the material things inferred from them, and thus constitutes a real advance beyond the traditional dualistic epistemology of Locke and Descartes. That such is not the case is (ironically enough) nowhere more clearly brought out than by Santayana himself, who quite frankly deduces a conclusion of pure skepticism from his own epistemology. For he tells us that the hypothesis that external things as the

causes and correspondents of our ideas do exist cannot at all be proved even with probability. We *believe* that they exist on the basis of "animal faith," which is the completely non-rational but biologically necessary instinct to regard our private mental states as symbolic of a public material nature. No actual skeptic, so far as I know, has claimed to disbelieve in an objective world. Skepticism is not a denial of belief, but rather a denial of rational grounds for belief. Santayana's picturesque name of "animal faith" does not in any way differentiate his position from that of Hume or other skeptics who have bowed to the inevitable fact that our basic practical attitudes toward the world are psychologically founded upon instinct rather than logically grounded on reason.

I shall conclude with two comments of a nature and temper more cheerful than my mainly destructive analyses of the arguments of both the New and the Critical Realists might seem to warrant.

First, then, for our comfort let us remember that *unproven* is *not disproven*. Grant that I have been right in arguing that New Realism, in its eagerness to *bridge the gap* between the mind and its physical world, has by its theory of Objective Relativism degraded the pure members of that world to an unseemly parity with the objects of error and fantasy, while at the same time, by its theory of Behaviorism, it has degraded the mind itself to a mass of "specific responses." Grant also that I have been right in arguing that Critical Realism has revived an old puzzle rather than contributed a new solution of it, and that in its eagerness to *preserve the gap* between the undisciplined hordes of mutually incompatible ideas and the single self-consistent system of univalent material entities it has made that gap as hopelessly unbridgeable as it was in the earlier dualistic realisms of Locke and Descartes. Grant me both of these negative appraisals of the two schools of American Realism, and I can still say that the object of their joint devotion, a physical world existing independently of the minds that inhabit it and use it, remains inviolate at least as



an object of faith if not as an object of proof. And that "faith" which, as Santayana has said, is necessary to the life of animals, may be also necessary to the growth and health of philosophy.

Certain it is that both of the recent movements of realism, whatever the validity of their arguments, have brought a new and more invigorating atmosphere to American philosophy—and this is the second and last of my concluding comments.

Prior to the advent of the New Realism, academic philosophy was curiously out of touch with common sense, with science, and even with religion. The usual tenor of a course in "Introduction to Philosophy" was to convince the students, in the first place, that Berkeley's conception of the physical world was essential to philosophic truth; and, in the second place, that it was a kind of truth which, when accepted, made no essential difference to any particular belief. The net result of such teaching was the impression that philosophy was a combination of the paradoxical and the unimportant. As for science, its working categories and great discoveries were all too often belittled as "vicious abstractions from the organic unity of experience." Philosophers as such (with the notable exception of Josiah Royce) regarded themselves as under no obligation to acquaint themselves with what experts in various departments were finding out about the universe. Finally, as to religion, the attitude of the professors alternated between a condescending neglect of it as a crude embryonic form of real philosophy and an idealistic defense of it that gave an all too easy assurance of God, Freedom, and Immortality based, not on a study of the universe and its history, but on a dialectical analysis of the problem of epistemology.

Thanks to Realism and also to Pragmatism, these thin manners of philosophy in the colleges have changed to something thicker and better. The teaching of metaphysics and ethics today is much more relevantly related to the natural and social sciences. And finally, the basic beliefs of religion are analyzed more often in terms of their connection with what is known about physical nature and human history than in

terms of idealistic platitudes, with the result that on the one hand the values and the dangers of the church as a social institution are better understood, and on the other hand Theism itself is seen as an exciting and momentous hypothesis rather than as either a dialectical truism or a mere dogma of faith.

In short, to some extent, at least, there has come into our speculative thinking a revival of the ancient Ionian attitudes of curiosity as to the specific features of the universe and of wonder as to its central mystery. And for this restoration of health to American philosophy, the two movements of New and Critical Realism, have, I believe, been largely responsible.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES <sup>1</sup>

BOODIN, JOHN ELOF (1869-1950). Student at the University of Colorado, University of Minnesota, Brown (M.A.), Harvard (Ph.D., 1899). Taught at Grinnell College, Carleton College, and University of California at Los Angeles. Published: *Truth and Reality* (1911); *A Realistic Universe* (1916); *Cosmic Evolution* (1925); *God, a Cosmic Philosophy of Religion* (1934). See *The Journal of Philosophy* (1907), 533-42.

COHEN, MORRIS RAPHAEL (1880-1947). Student at the City College of New York, Harvard (Ph.D., 1906). Taught at Davidson Collegiate Institute, City College of New York. Paul Carus Lecturer, 1942. Published: *Reason and Nature* (1931); *The Meaning of Human History* (1947). See *The Journal of Philosophy* (1914), 617-27.

DEWEY, JOHN (1859-1952). Student at University of Vermont, Johns Hopkins (Ph.D., 1884). Taught at Universities of Michigan, Minnesota, and Chicago, and at Columbia (1904-39). Paul Carus Lecturer, 1924. Of his publications the following are directly related to realism: *Experience and Nature* (1925, Carus Lectures); articles in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1910) 553-57; (1911) 77-79, 393-400, 546-54; (1912) 19-21, 544-48; (1915) 357-70; (1917) 161-63, 491-93; (1918) 29-35; (1922) 309-17, 561-70; (1923) 617-22; (1925) 596-605; (1927) 57-64, 449-63; (1928) 345-53; (1931) 309-14; (1935) 701-8; (1936) 253-61, 673-80; (1941) 533-42; (1942) 29-35; (1943) 309-17; (1945) 225-47, 515-30; (1948) 197-208; "Nature in Experience," *Philosophical Review* (1940), 244-58; *Knowing and the Known* (with Arthur F. Bentley) (1949); "Experience and Existence," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1949), 709-13.

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- JAMES, WILLIAM (1842-1910). Studied in France and Germany especially under Wilhelm Wundt at Heidelberg in the field of "psychology as a natural science." Began teaching at Harvard in 1876. Published his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890, in which he raised the problems (see R. B. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* [1935], II, 72-86) which led to his realistic "radical empiricism," and the publication of his sensational article, "Does Consciousness Exist?" in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1904), 477-91.
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Reservé, Princeton, Rutgers (1910-44). Published: *Die Gültigkeit unserer Erkenntnis der objektiven Welt* (1898); *A First Book in Metaphysics* (1913).

MEAD, GEORGE H. (1863-1931). Student at Harvard (Ph.D., 1888). Taught at University of Michigan, Chicago (1894-31). Carus Lecturer, 1930. Published: *Carus Lectures, The Philosophy of the Present* (1932); *The Philosophy of the Act* (1938).

MONTAGUE, WILLIAM P. (1873-1953). Student at Harvard (Ph.D., 1898). Taught at Radcliffe College (Harvard), University of California, Barnard College (1903-52). Published: *The Ways of Knowing* (1925); *The Ways of Things* (1940); "Consciousness a Form of Energy," in *Essays in Honor of William James* (1908); articles on realism in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1909) 406-13, 485-90, 543-8, 561-71; (1912) 39-46; (1914) 48-64; (1921) 172-84; "A Materialistic Theory of Emergent Evolution," in *Essays in Honor of John Dewey* (1929); "The Story of American Realism," in *Philosophy* (1937), 1-22.

PEIRCE, CHARLES S. (1840-1914). Trained as a mathematician and physical scientist; began writing his realistic essays in 1867. Taught for a few years in the 1880's at the Johns Hopkins University. Delivered his Lowell Lectures at Harvard in 1905. See the volumes of his *Collected Papers*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, which began to appear in 1931 (Harvard University Press) and are still appearing.

PERRY, RALPH BARTON (1876-1957). Student at Princeton, Harvard (Ph.D., 1899). Taught at Williams College, Smith College, Harvard (1902-55). Published: *The Moral Economy* (1905); *Philosophy of the Recent Past* (1926); *General Theory of Value* (1926); articles on realism in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1904) 282-96; (1910) 5-14, 337-53, 365-79; (1913) 449-63.

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WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH (1861-1947). After contributing to the realist movement in Great Britain, he became a professor at Harvard in 1924, and adopted his *Principles of Natural Knowledge* (1919) to the basic concepts and methods of the American movement. This system was expounded in *Process and Reality* (1929). See also his *Symbolism* (1927), and *Nature and Life* (1934). He opposed dualistic realism and ideal-

ism by developing an analysis of mental and natural processes which avoided (or evaded) the "bifurcation of nature."

WOODBRIDGE, FREDERICK J. E. (1867-1940). Student at Amherst College, Union Theological Seminary, University of Berlin. Taught at University of Minnesota and Columbia (1902-39). Published: *The Purpose of History* (1916); *The Realm of Mind* (1926); *Nature and Mind* (1937); *An Essay on Nature* (1940). See *The Journal of Philosophy* (1913), 599-608.



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